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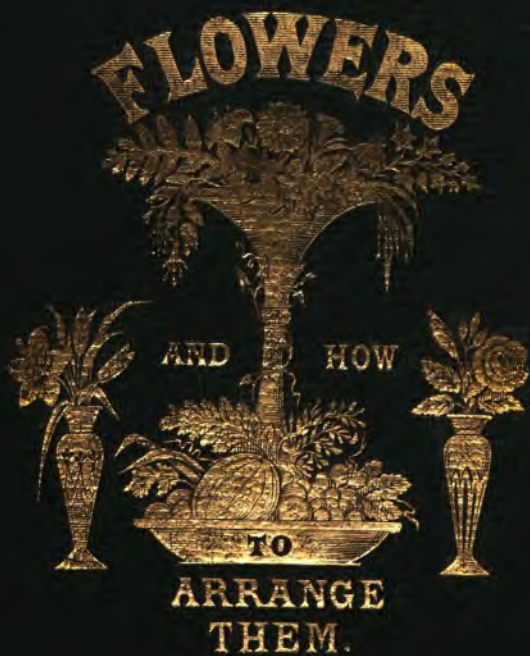
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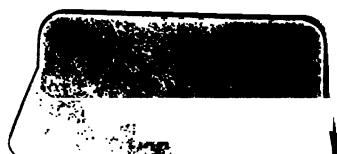
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W E R N

ATION,

ELLING

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MDCCCXXXII

100. c. 70.

1. The first group of people who are
2. interested in the study of the
3. history of the world are the
4. historians. They are people who
5. study the past and try to
6. understand what happened and
7. why it happened. They use
8. many different sources of
9. information, such as books,
10. documents, and artifacts, to
11. reconstruct the past. They
12. also try to understand the
13. people who lived in the past
14. and how they lived. They
15. try to understand the
16. culture and society of the
17. past and how it has changed
18. over time. They also try to
19. understand the role of the
20. individual in history and how
21. the individual can influence
22. the course of history. They
23. also try to understand the
24. role of the state in history
25. and how the state can influence
26. the course of history. They
27. also try to understand the
28. role of the economy in history
29. and how the economy can
30. influence the course of history.

2. The second group of people who
3. are interested in the study of
4. the history of the world are the
5. archaeologists. They are people
6. who study the past by digging
7. up the remains of ancient
8. civilizations. They use many
9. different tools and techniques
10. to excavate and study the
11. remains of ancient civilizations.
12. They also try to understand
13. the culture and society of the
14. past and how it has changed
15. over time. They also try to
16. understand the role of the
17. individual in history and how
18. the individual can influence
19. the course of history. They
20. also try to understand the
21. role of the state in history
22. and how the state can influence
23. the course of history. They
24. also try to understand the
25. role of the economy in history
26. and how the economy can
27. influence the course of history.

F L O W E R S

FOR

ORNAMENT AND DECORATION,

AND

HOW TO ARRANGE THEM.

BY

MISS MALING,

AUTHOR OF

"IN-DOOR PLANTS, AND HOW TO GROW THEM;" AND "SONG
BIRDS, AND HOW TO KEEP THEM."

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

M.DCCC.LXII.

~~100. c. 70.~~
101. c. 182



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PREFACE.

AMONG the many books that we already have upon the growth of plants, there seem to be few, if any, on the after arrangement of what Florists call "Cut-Flowers."

This has, however, become of late no unimportant matter, both as a question of tasteful arrangement and skilful manipulation, and as a rather serious item of household expenditure; the *diner Russe* requiring so very many flowers, and the taste for having them increasing with such rapidity.

For myself, I have always been so very fond of everything connected in any way with flowers, as to have lost none of the many opportunities that have occurred to me, of obtaining good instruc-

tions in the art of their arrangement; and thus I hope that a little Manual, embodying these hints, and describing accurately many such designs, may not be unwelcome.

I have endeavoured in this little volume to explain, in the most clear and simple manner, everything that is required in arranging flowers; and I hope that those who adopt my hints for German wreaths and Russian dinners, French bouquets and Italian pavements, dishes of growing flowers, and ornaments for slabs and tables—not forgetting also the more massive wreaths and more elaborate fabrics for architectural decorations—may find that they afford them some means, which they had not before, of using flowers to the best advantage; economizing their number, when, as in towns, they are rare and costly luxuries; classing their colours rightly, and choosing the kinds correctly, so as to avoid a useless and harmful waste of their much-prized brightness.

I must not close this preface without acknowledging my great obligations to Messrs. Veitch, of Chelsea, Messrs. Hooper, of Covent

Garden, and many other florists, who have given me information as to correct names and good varieties of flowers, and often shown me specimens I might not have seen otherwise.

In regard to the vases, fountains, flower-stands, &c., mentioned throughout this book, I have also to acknowledge the advantages afforded me by Messrs. Phillips and Co., of Oxford Street, and Messrs. Minton, in often showing me beautiful new designs.

The Frontispiece represents a Group of Flowers and Fruit designed by myself, the arrangement of which was so much liked by Messrs. Phillips and Co., that they have manufactured the Vase for sale, and it may be seen at their establishments in Oxford Street and Bond Street.

E. A. M.

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FLOWERS

FOR ORNAMENT AND DECORATION, AND HOW TO ARRANGE THEM.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

1. MANY books have, at different times, been written about plants and flowers, abounding in directions as to how to grow them well, but seldom even hinting at how to arrange them best.

This, however, since the universal adoption of the *diner Russe*, has really become no unimportant art ; neither is the cost an unimportant item in the weekly bills of very many houses.

The complaint, too, is growing common, that flowers are a useless and disheartening expenditure of much time and money ; and sometimes certainly the expense mounts up considerably, without any improve-

ment in the results attained ; for it often happens that, by mere accident, the flowers look really lovelier when little pains has been taken, and little expense incurred.

It is, however, a very rare accomplishment—the art of arranging flowers gracefully and well ; and though, fortunately, flowers are intrinsically so beautiful that they can hardly be spoilt, few things are more uncommon than to see them grouped together thoroughly artistically.

When I say artistically, of course I mean that perfect degree of art in which no art is visible ; when everything looks so simple and so natural, that it could hardly be imagined other than what it is.

There are a great many things which should be considered in arranging flowers ; and though I have no pretensions to lay down laws about it, I have had the help of many useful hints as to their “making up ;” while good rules for combining colours, of course, apply to most things in common.

2. The German and Russian women, however, far surpass the English generally, in their many modes of weaving flowers into household use ; and when, some time ago, I was much with a little Gräffinn, far from the Vaterland, with its flower-decked salons, and graceful, pretty fancies, we found such a mutual interest in our love of plants and flowers, that

she kindly taught me all her many ways of doing these pretty works.

3. In the art of arranging flowers we have in the first place to make a judicious choice of the most appropriate kinds ; which, whether for the dress or for vase adornment, must be chosen with due regard to the place which they are to fill, and to the colours with which they will be surrounded.

After making a choice of colours, and determining on our flowers, we have next to consider how best to gather and mount them ; how to preserve them from fading prematurely ; how to make such a framework as best to secure these objects, while economising our flowers ; and lastly comes the actual placing of the flowers themselves.

There is a good deal to be said hereafter on several of these points. At present we have only to glance at a few of the mistakes which are now most prevalent ; and to indicate a few of the points that deserve to be considered in choosing flowers.

It seems to me that flowers are regarded by us too much as mere accessories. While in France and Germany the wreaths and bouquets are so very charming, and there is not a toilette without its appropriate flower *parure*—no family *fête* in Germany without its graceful door-wreaths, and its garlanded picture-frames, and its coronals of flowers—with us there seems no connection between flowers and their

surroundings ; and it is certain that most of the English women who are fond of flowers use most often such as are either in form or colour quite unsuited to the things around them : arranging their vases, and decking their dinner-tables, with very little regard to the general harmony.

4. To speak for an instant of dress : it is doubtless most desirable that flowers should suit the general colour and style of the dress and ribbons with which they are to be worn ; but it is very rare for this point to be considered ? An attempt to *match* the colours is not, indeed, desirable ; very few flowers *can* be matched with colours of human dye ; and where the tints do not exactly match, the contrast is objectionable.

Colours are also greatly influenced by substance and texture ; and the peculiar qualities of the various petals render it quite impossible to match their hues by any of our fabrics.

5. It is only, indeed, those who are fond of painting and of tracing effects of colour, who would, perhaps, observe or trace to their real key-notes the exquisite harmony of some of the arrangements into which flowers enter—tracing the tone and the brightness which is given by them.

Much may be done, however, by avoiding contrasts—or rather, I should say, comparisons of tint—by bringing in those touches which really soften, and

seeking for soft and harmonious blending of the shades, rather than as now, for strong and startling effects of colour ; remembering, also, that where a contrast is used, something that tones it down and softens it is absolutely required. Cerise and scarlet flowers, for instance, may look charmingly with white ; but then they have their green to tone the colour down. Pale pink flowers are amongst the loveliest ornaments for a dress of blue ; but then little knots of palest blue and white would by a Frenchwoman be brought in, most certainly. And, again, with pink, what can be lovelier than flowers of blue and white, made to harmonize by the faint pink shade which is pencilled on the *Convolvulus*, and tints the buds of the *Forget-me-not* ?

With an artificial colour, such as mauve, for instance, it seems more difficult to find out flowers that suit ; as it combines already quite too many colours. I have thought primrose the best adapted to it, when well set in green. Primroses themselves are charming to fill purple vases, or light up purple hangings ; and one of the most beautiful groups is formed of the palest Primroses, with the large, deep purple Pansies, or the purple Violets laid upon the Primroses.

With black hair and costume, or to lighten up dark recesses, few would think of using other than light flowers ; and yet, after making but one

trial of the deeper and richer shades, the former would seem very ineffective.

With the darker ground, it is a great thing, certainly, to have the deepest and richest of the floral colours; bright little leaves and tendrils, and brilliant veins and edgings, catching a vivid light, and enlivening the group sufficiently; but light flowers alone look very poor on a ground of black, while dark flowers on white look heavy, and often clumsy.

6. Having said thus much on the choice of colour, I hope to be forgiven for feeling much indifference as to the actual flowers which we may have to use, and for having an entire disregard for grand hot-house plants, no matter how new or costly, if they are not most beautiful. I think, on the contrary, that when a common, every-day flower will do quite as well, and be quite as pretty, it is most indefensible to pass it over, merely because it is placed within reach of all. Before going any further, I must therefore say, that throughout this little volume, wherever two flowers occur to me as equally good to use, I invariably name the commonest, the sweetest, and the least expensive, in cases where these qualities are now and then found together.

CHAPTER II.

CHOICE OF COLOURS.

1. PERHAPS before proceeding to mention special kinds of flowers to use, it will be well to name two or three of the most constant rules of colour, as regards small groups, and wreaths of flowers generally.

I would remark, at the outset, that the rules of colour for flowers, in these small quantities, are not generally applicable to those that compose a garden ; nor, on the other hand, is it often that the most beautiful garden arrangement answers well, if reproduced in a flower-vase : the circumstances and accessories of each are so utterly different.

To speak, however, of actual colours and shades, I do not think myself that mixing many colours ever answers well ; and, writing chiefly for ladies, I may use an illustration into which they will enter. Taking shades of wool—not for a flower, but merely for working into a formal pattern—has it been ever found that pink, scarlet, crimson, and brickdust colours mix in well together ? Will purple and Eugenie blue, mauve and magenta, amalgamate at all ? Or what is the effect on bluish-white—that most exquisite shelly tint, I mean, like the white Gloxinias with the purple

eye—on pinkish-white and on ivory white, of being contrasted with the purest snow ?

All workers know that these colours will not agree together. They may make their five, or seven, or even perhaps nine or eleven shades of the most intangible gradations of depth ; and the more the shades the softer and more delicate will the colour be : but these are shades, not colours, and wonderful indeed is the difference made by this.

It should, therefore, be laid down as a law, that where one colour is, no different form of the same colour is to be introduced—only shades of the one colour there is, and other distinct colours which harmonize with it well.

2. With crimson, for instance, one has pink, and one of the very prettiest sorts of pink too ; but that is in harmony, as a shade of crimson. And then for the white to go with it ? A pinkish-white, of course, to harmonise with the rest ? Harmony, on the contrary, in this case, I think, requires contrast ; just as in music, scientific people tell me that there must be a discord to produce sweet sounds ; and thus, perhaps, a cold bluish white would, more than any colour, soften and enhance the bright pale tint of pink.

3. The same rules that apply to dress and work in general, will thus have also reference to natural flowers and to their arrangement ; while practice in this will,

perhaps, more than anything, render the arranger an adept in the good disposition of shades and colours generally—an accomplishment which, to women, is most often useful.

Let us then take for granted that, in arranging flowers, the laws of the German wool-work may be borne in mind ; and if those who wish to adorn their rooms or dress with flowers would only consider the “grounding” to be prepared for them, as if it were for a cushion, I think both work and dress would soon be much improved by the sort of education that the eye would receive, having once been directed to seek out what colours do well together—those which are unobtrusive in the complete effect being generally those grouped most successfully.

4. In writing of colour, in all arrangements of which white comes in so usefully, a caution is very necessary against the too frequent use that may be made, unthinkingly, of this tempting means of separating antagonistic colours. It must not be forgotten that white so greatly impoverishes other colours, that even a brilliant assortment of most splendid flowers may easily be made poor and trivial by a quantity of meaningless dabs of white scattered all about. It is just like putting in bright lights at regular distances all over some large picture, without any regard to natural lights and shades.

5. When delicate pale flowers are used, however,

the white sometimes tends to throw them up, and to make their colours, by contrast, more distinct; but then the flowers should be coloured—not white with a mere pale tinge. Passion-flowers, for instance, mingled with pale pink, are peculiarly lovely; but if white Roses are substituted for the rose-coloured, the effect is made so different that one would hardly believe the same flowers were there; the reason is, that the Passion-flower is shaded down into a sort of greenish white.

It is, of course, often very pretty to group amongst white flowers just enough of colour to give them a little tone; but *that* need not be patchy, because it should be evident that the white is the real object, while the other is only used to give to it a little relief of colour.

6. Rose colour with a little blue; blue with a little rose; white with mauve or lilac, and sometimes with primrose; dark purple and primrose; dark blue and bright scarlet; cerise or scarlet and white; blue shaded into a mixture of white and rose, and rose shaded also into blue and white—may look really charming.

7. In those arrangements, however, where *several* decided colours are used, it is most essential to avoid a large and heavy mass, so to speak, of any. Geraniums and Rose-buds, sprays of Heath and Lilacs, answer thus much better than full-blown Camellias,

Roses, and Carnations ; unless, of course, for distinct pattern arrangements, or for distant effects.

Large masses, however, generally do best ; and where I have seen a cloud of pink at one side of a vase (or of a bouquet of flowers for carrying in the hand), and at the other side another cloud of blue, the edges softened and half-shaded, and breaking in upon each other, while the centre was perhaps pink and blue together, it is certain that nothing seemed to be the least incongruous. I have seen also dots of lilac mixed in with the white between the clouds of colour, as if in reality the colours had run together ; and these touches, when chosen with a true eye for colour, answer extremely well.

8: For large striking effects, the smaller flowers are very much worse than useless. They dim the colours, and render them thick and muddy when actually too far off to be seen themselves.

In a vase, for instance, that is filled with red and white, the few large massive flowers grouped together, loosely and gracefully, may look most effective ; but five or six smaller crimson flowers touching upon the white, and five or six white flowers touching upon the crimson, would spoil the contrast entirely ; and instead of softening, render it poor and cloudy, with neither light nor shade. Three scarlet Cactuses, again, or *Géant des batailles* Roses, grouped together in one or two places only,

would have more effect than at least a dozen similar flowers placed in a scattered manner, broken up with white, or even divided from each other by a large mass of green leaves.

9. The green itself requires also no small degree of attention ; as disregard of its prevailing tint may often tend to overpower, instead of to enhance, the brightness of the flowers.

The shade of green, as a general rule, should harmonize with that which grows naturally with the flowers. Very dark green generally only does well with pure-tinted heavy flowers, like Roses and Camellias ; though sometimes also it may go well with white, especially with spring flowers, the texture of which is generally rather thick and waxen : while the natural green, at that especial season, is chiefly that of the hardy evergreens.

Where there is room for choice, the bright grass green will generally, by candlelight especially, be found to look the best ; and yellowish green, especially when thin leaved, by a very great deal the worst.

CHAPTER III.

CHOICE OF FLOWERS.

1. A GREAT deal of success in arranging flowers most certainly depends on acquaintance with the qualities of those which we wish to use. This acquaintance, of course, is only to be gained by a careful course of personal observation, and by a classification which gives each flower a place for which it is really suited. By neglecting these precautions, or by being ignorant of the uses for which special flowers are naturally adapted, we are liable both to waste very many, and often to spoil a most charming group by introducing into it *one* flower that is out of place.

In a knot of flowers to wear in the dress, for instance, what seems more attractive than the graceful Fuchsias? yet few, after one attempt, would wear them.—Round the edge of a brilliant vase they are, however, charming.

Heliotrope, again :—how many groups of flowers has its presence spoilt in less than half an hour?

Primroses placed at the edge of a bouquet of flowers for carrying in the hand; Roses (unless well mounted) and berries for the hair; wreaths also of the exquisite bell-like *Convolvulus*, are obviously misplaced. Still how many flowers like these have been worse than wasted, merely for want of knowing the requisite

conditions for their use, or of adopting the simple means required to preserve them? Roses, again, there are, and Roses—Geraniums and Geraniums. Some will fade to the last extent without becoming dull; while others in half an hour acquire a dead blue tinge, which spoils the brightness of everything they come near.

As a general rule, plants that take little water are those that supply the most lasting flowers—at any rate for the dress.

2. In crimson flowers the thing to guard against is a tendency to turn a lilacish blue in fading; some crimson Roses possessing, from their first opening, that most unwelcome tinge. In white flowers, generally, the risk is their turning yellow; Gardenias do so, for instance; they should be, therefore, placed in the centre of a group, far from the risk of dryness. Stephanotis, on the contrary, if properly mounted, retains its waxen look for a much longer time. Hyacinths and Azaleas scarcely ever lose their beauty; neither do Anemones, nor yet Carnations. Camellias, on the contrary, are apt to be disfigured easily, especially by moisture.

3. The use of quickly fading green often ruins many otherwise good arrangements. Young leaves of all kinds flag extremely quickly, though older and thicker foliage often lasts very long.

Fern leaves, moss, and grass, for instance, used in

dinner vases, last very well, if preserved from the dry air when they are off the table. Both for lasting and for beauty, the various Hares-foot and Maiden-hair Ferns, with the Pteris (or varieties of Brake), answer about the best. The Adiantums and Lastreas are particularly beautiful, and also are amongst those which are grown most easily.

4. The Scarlet Geranium leaves preserve many flowers freshly by their own velvety texture, which retains so much moisture. Their flowers last perfectly also, if small few-flowered stems are chosen, on which *none* have yet begun to fade at all.

The ivy-leaved kinds of Geraniums, cut off short and mounted (a drop of gum being dropped into each flower), and also the bright velvet-petalled cerise "Unique" Geraniums, are peculiarly well adapted for wearing in a wreath.

Heath keeps beautifully, as almost all flowers do which admit of being gathered on a hard woody stem.

5. No Fuchsia should ever be used in bouquets to be carried; the flowers drop so readily, and are so invariably crushed if drooping; while, if prevented from hanging in their own natural graceful way, they look most painfully out of place and keeping.

Heliotrope should rarely be used, because it turns black so soon; Nemophila never, for its flowers, like the Fuchsia, speedily fall off.

Chinese-honeysuckle is charming for breaking with

its foliage any formal rows, and so are the pretty Ribbon and Feather Grasses, and evergreen Rose leaves also ; nor must I omit little sprays of white and purple Clematis. Of course it will be understood that in mentioning here so many varying flowers, often belonging to quite different seasons, I do so merely that, out of the numerous kinds there are, every one may find some that will be likely at all times to suit them.

Various-coloured Roses, for example, are amongst the loveliest of flowers for June ; but a month earlier Hyacinths, or even double Tulips, might look very beautiful ; and later, Verbenas and Chrysanthemums are tolerably pretty. Carnations and Pinks are beautiful and very lasting flowers ; I have seen exquisite pale rose-coloured Carnations blossoming in November—in fact, almost continuously from July to February—and they are sweet-scented, and keep perfectly unfaded ; their only fault is the headache their scent occasions some persons.

6. Anemones are very lovely for a dinner-table : they blaze out in the brilliant light, and really become a most striking spectacle ; but they must be allowed the benefit of full light for at least half an hour before they are required to be in their expanded beauty. The bright scarlet, pale blue, pink, and blue shaded into white, are very lovely ; and they should have, if possible, a soft, mossy kind of foliage.

Ferns or Lycopodiums do with them well ; their own leaves being far too rough in general, looking rather like very untidy Parsley.

7. Azaleas perhaps, of all flowers, keep almost the best, and are the most lovely when made up with something water-proof rolled around them, or when kept in a vase. If, however, they are suffered to lie by, even for a short time, in a dry place, out of water, they fade very quickly ; and though occasionally they revive in water, this cannot ever be depended on with certainty.

8. Azaleas, also, should *never* be laid in a box or basket amongst other flowers.

They travel perfectly as well as Camellias ; but, for both, the French fashion is essential—*sewing* or tying each separate flower down to a piece of card covered with damp blotting paper, fixed, itself, to the bottom of a closely shut tin box.

Several layers will thus travel safely ; but, when Camellias are in question, between each set the space should be filled with a thick layer of cotton wool. Flowers, just unpacked after travelling, should never be exposed to light or heat immediately : it is with them the same as with starving plants or people,—the light being almost like food to flowers.

9. The very small red Van-Thol Tulips are really sometimes deserving, for their fragrance, of a place in a bouquet ; they are, too, so brilliant in colour at

a time of year when flowers are rather scarce. Snow-drops, with their own leaves, make most lovely groups with Fern leaves and Blue-bells; they also make charming fringes for many other flowers. One of the most useful white flowers, for all sorts of purposes, is the common Lilac, each large pyramidal cluster being cut into small pieces, and each piece being mounted with wire on a slender piece of stick. White Violets, again; white Hyacinths, the bells being mounted two or three together; or the beautiful bouquet Hyacinths, which may be used entirely. I am told that white Alyssum is not to be despised, and white Verbenas and Geraniums are always on the list.

10. The Lilac is a useful flower to bear in mind, as it forces easily and well; and Chinese Primroses are amongst the best of winter flowers, if duly brushed over with gum water underneath each flower. Lilies of the Valley, the pretty little *Deutzia gracilis*, Snowdrops, some Azaleas, and many kinds of white Roses, are also of the essential snowy white; and so is the exquisite little scented Clematis, which is amongst the very best of edgings; but common white Jessamine rarely looks well, or lasts long to wear. *Stephanotis* no one would hesitate in adopting for a bouquet; and the same remark applies to the sweet white Cape Jessamines and to the Gardenias. White Myrtle blossom is often to be found in its prettiest

half-open stage ; and Orange blossoms, which are, however, not for common use.

The double blossoms of many shrubs, as of the Cherry ; the garden Wood Anemone and the wild Sweet Woodruff ; Primroses also, when they can be procured quite white ; and double white Hepaticas might sometimes be used, with many others which will occur to every one.

11. The most delightful pink *Daphne* (*Daphne Cneorum*), *Roses de Meaux*, *Pæstum Roses*, and the white *Banksias* and *Noisettes*, *Géant des Batailles*, *Lamarque's Tea-Roses*, and the old-fashioned *Maiden-Blush* ; the delightful *Provence* kinds (the *Provence* are like the sweet old Cabbage *Roses* ; the *Provins*, on the contrary, are of the Gallican and *not* much scented class) ; very distinctly coloured *Geraniums*—*Dr. André* and others of the fringed kinds being amongst the loveliest ; *Mignonette* in spikes, and sweet *Verbena*, in rather hidden sprays—all these flowers are beautiful.

Then there is a charming class of New Holland plants—the pretty little *Crowea*, for instance, now blossoming in my Plant Case, as it has done for weeks without a sign of fading ; exquisite *Orchids*, also, and *Cyclamens*, almost as lovely and as waxen ; not forgetting the many summer flowering bulbs—*Lilies*, *Gladiolus*, *Ixias*, &c. ; all of which generally produce long-lasting and thick-petalled flowers.

12. The many climbing plants, with their graceful wreaths, may be also used : *Lapagerias* and *Bouvardias*, *Passion Flowers*, also, with their most delicate perfume, and their blue or crimson flowers; and even amongst the trailers, the little blue *Lobelia* and the purple *Torrenia*, and the new *Stenogaster*, blooming incessantly from May to December, and I know not how much longer !

13. Then there are *Begonia* leaves and *Ferns*, like the *Pteris tricolor*, brilliant themselves in colour; and the magnificent *Caladiums*, *Veitchii*, *Chantini*, and *Belleymeyii*; all, in themselves, so exquisitely beautiful as to render flowers almost unneeded in places where they are.

CHAPTER IV.

MOUNTING AND MENDING.

1. A VERY useful though mechanical operation is that of mounting and mending flowers. Every one knows how often a beautiful flower-head falls from its stem, and how often we are forced to refrain from gathering one bright blossom, because on the same stalk are others not yet out which we cannot sacrifice.

The mounting prevents this difficulty; for the Parisian *fleuristes* prove that a flower with less than half an inch of footstalk does quite as well as any other could

do. Taking it in its freshest state, either newly gathered or preserved in a dark cupboard (the cupboard must, however, be perfectly fresh and airy), before it is made up, the smallest piece of well-soaked cotton wool is pressed around its stem; a little piece of wire wound upon it keeps the wool closely fastened, and at the same time fixes the flower into its proper bunch. The cotton requires soaking and pressing together in the water for some time, to become thoroughly saturated, unless a piece for each flower is moistened separately. A fresh green Myrtle leaf does very nicely for rolling over the wool, to prevent its being seen; and green stems should be used for attaching the flowers together.

2. Many persons, including most of the French florists, have the habit of binding their flowers, when duly prepared or mended, on little pieces of stick for the actual stalk—common square bits of deal, for instance, which are well adapted to the purpose, being so perfectly hard and light.

3. But special flowers have still their little peculiarities. A Rose, we will suppose, has snapped from the stem just underneath the cup. To bind the wire above the cup would be likely to cause the petals to be too much compressed or cut. It is better to take it round the calyx, just where it is sufficiently compressible to give a secure hold; or we might even carry one sharp end of the wire through a needle-pierced

hole, instead of risking damaging the flower more ; then proceed with it as I said before.

4. A white *Camellia*, again, is injured by the smallest touch of moisture on its petals, as it causes on them a yellow stain, quite destroying the fairness of that pure white flower. This flower, therefore, needs very great care in its preparation, though it afterwards answers beautifully.

The best way is, before touching the flower, to moisten thoroughly a piece, the size of half a crown, of white cotton wool (using for pink flowers pink wool in preference). This should be laid on a larger piece nearly the size of the flower itself, which should then be most gently raised, two ends of a loop of wire having first been passed through the centre of the wool. Often, especially for an inexperienced hand, a piece of Berlin wool does better than the wire, as a too-tight pull would be likely to do less damage. An experienced flower-mounter would, however, in a moment, raise the enlarged loop to touch the lower petals evenly all round ; cause it to slip between the leaflets, or points of the thickish calyx, and the flower itself ; tighten it almost imperceptibly, yet enough to retain its hold ; and then rapidly reversing the flower, or raising the cotton to it, she would pass the wire through the wetted wool, bringing it down upon a support formed by a spray of *Camellia* leaves, or a branch of stumpy foliage of some evergreen kind ; or

binding it down upon the piece of deal I spoke of, and arranging the wool to rest on the green foundation through which the stem formed passes.

Some persons use melted isinglass rather freely, to cause the petals of the flower to adhere to the wool; and, where the *Camellia* is to be used in decorations, this practice cannot be too strongly advocated. Besides the security as to keeping the flower moist, it insures some petals remaining on the wool, even supposing that the rest should fall.

5. In a crown of *Camellias* I remember seeing, (used in the adornment of a beautifully wreathed doorway,) the flowers were arranged something in this manner. They were required to last for several days in the place they filled, and at the end of the third day they were still in perfect beauty. The blaze of light then caused some leaves to drop; but the wool underneath retained the appearance of the flowers still, as it would do always when the petals thus clung to it. The effect was so good that I had the curiosity to take considerable trouble to ascertain the name of the maker of that crown, and to find out by divers experiments the process which had been used, which many times since has stood me in useful stead.

6. Clearness is very essential in any gum to be used. Isinglass is very good, from its being stiff and not sticky, while quite free from any yellow tinge.

7. For mounting *Geraniums*, *Azaleas*, and so on,

the heads should be cut off with an inch or so of stalk ; a drop of gum be given inside, to fix the flower, and then the usual process should be performed of rolling in wool and wiring. Sometimes, however, there are single blossoms separated from the cluster to be grouped together. Attaching a short wire to the stalk of each, all may be duly twisted together and provided with the wool ; and thus one often gets a few stray bunches of very natural-looking flowers.

8. Water Lilies do most capitally, treated like Camellias, as to the bed of well-wetted wool on which they should repose ; but little clustering flowers should always be fixed on sprays of foliage similar to their own in growth ; and they are, therefore, best adapted for surrounding and softening the edges of the more solid circles, or for the circle of waving green and flowers that surrounds the whole.

The rule of affixing to each flower its own appropriate foliage, is one that greatly deserves to be remembered well ; each flower seeming to have some peculiar shade and shape of leaf, which, beyond all others, suits it.

CHAPTER V.

SHAPES AND PATTERNS.

1. I DID intend that this chapter should be about flowers themselves, and how to arrange them, and put them all together, but I begin to think it would be wrong to adhere to that plan.

When shapes are provided for them, patterns are worked out easily ; but I fear it is nearly impossible to form them, at least in variety, till these shapes are understood in some degree.

They can be made in a variety of ways. Some use frames of very fine green wire, like the old-fashioned little violet-baskets, only smaller meshed ; so that a single stick, or a stem stripped of all its leaves, passes through each hole, all being bound together underneath the frame.

This is one of the easiest plans of all ; the holes being, of course, arranged in circles, and the flowers being carefully kept to a very even surface, the effect of the group is then extremely good, and particularly lasting. This group, however, as commonly arranged, has this disadvantage—that when the petals begin to fall, or the flowers to shrivel up, it is no longer ornamental, while more solid masses look less objectionable.

For one or two days' use, however—as for a dinner-table, or for carrying in the hand—nothing can do better. It is exceedingly light to hold, and looks light also, while it is at the same time very firm, and for economy of flowers it is unsurpassed.

2. I proceed to give the receipt, as precisely as in a crochet-book, for making this—overcoming, I hope, its usual reproach of bareness. Having fixed the required size of the bouquet, when complete, take a slight wire or pierced frame, two inches less in diameter than is proposed for the extreme edge of the solid bouquet—that is to say, the extreme edge of the last connected row of flowers. There may, of course, be a stray Fern leaf, or even a fringe of Fern leaves, to come beyond the frame; but I do not count these, because they are not solid, and must not, therefore, be included in calculating the size.

It is not at all a disadvantage when, as is often the case, the frame, though otherwise nearly flat, rises apparently a little too abruptly in the middle. A large flower is best for that place, and these are always better when they can rest upon the solid foundation. I only mention this now; however, as regarding the frame; the flowers will come under future consideration.

The frame is made much more convenient by having a stem—or rather two, or four, separate wire-stems—with a space the size of a pen-holder between them,

just like a parasol handle; and though a beginner must be very ingenious to make the wire frame, the stems can be affixed without any uncommon stretch of skill. Where people do try making their own frames, my advice to them is to use silver wire. The quantity wanted is not great, and the ruin of gloves that is caused by other kinds would be likely to be vexatious. Silver, also, is much more easily bent.

3. The circumference of a circle being, of course, three times the diameter, if the frame is to be six inches in diameter, the piece of wire for the outside circle should be eighteen inches long; and then, unless the flowers are meant to be used very small indeed, I think I may say the succeeding lengths should be each three inches shortened, till the last makes a circle about the size of a sixpence. This allows for four rows between the centre and the outside edge—six in all; and as it is better to allow an inch at least for a beginner, for fastening the ends, the wire should be cut into lengths of nineteen, sixteen, thirteen, ten, seven, and four inches. Each of these pieces should be twisted or neatly hooked together into circles of their respective sizes; and then, the centre one being formed, three wires should be attached to it in the manner of parasol frames—going out towards the edge, and dividing it into three parts as equally as may be. These wires have to be

each three inches long; and at least another inch must be allowed for twisting.

Laying the concentric rings upon the table in their proper order, the three frame wires are passed in and out till they are firmly hooked upon the outer circle, the other circles being secured in their places by knots of netting-silk. It is very easy afterwards, by gentle bending, to give the desired curve to the upper surface; and two or three long, strong wires, at least eight inches long, being attached to the centre circle, the parasol frame will be found to look quite complete, while it can at any time be enlarged by another ring, supported by two extra pieces of the wire frame; or the three already named may be cut each an inch and a half longer than is required, so as to turn up or down as wanted.

It would be better if the wire were cut into the lengths required at the shop where it is bought, as in that case it would be in perfectly straight pieces.

This wire is rather expensive at a jeweller's; but I have been told by French friends that the Paris shops, where rosaries are made, are the best and cheapest for it.

Where the frames are not intended for carrying in the hand, but only for vases or for dishes, the zinc wire can be used, which is very easily bent into shape. Of course, square dishes or ovals can be filled by wires on the same principle; and in squares

it is, perhaps, better to arrange them for a central, circular bouquet, with the corners filled up ; because, unless the wire frame is in the form of rings, it is so difficult to prevent the effect being liney.

The saving of flowers effected by this plan is something marvellous.

4. In cases where very small flowers are used, a round piece of green or black silk netting, laid on outside the frame, and fastened over all round the edge, answers every purpose ; and where wire is really unattainable, or not to be managed easily, the frame can be made entirely of such netting on a cane or whalebone shape, this being so far advantageous that it is exceedingly light and also inexpensive.

These directions are very dry and uninteresting, I fear ; still we must put up the scaffolding before we can accomplish the building ; and our work hereafter will be made very easy, by arranging these things rightly before attempting to proceed any further.

5. Amongst the questions we have now to take in hand are, what shapes and patterns are allowable and artistic ; and how, when chosen, we may make such patterns.

The styles, of course, may be very different ; the size of the flowers, and their colours, having much to do with this.

In many cases, where exceedingly small flowers are

chosen, the pattern may be rather elaborate, and at the same time most perfect in taste and execution. Have any of my readers seen a bouquet having for its pattern a wreath of small bright flowers on an entirely white ground ?

6. Now, a wreath of Forget-me-not, arranged on a white ground, would make a charming sentimental bouquet ! and floral designs are certainly very preferable for flowers, to stiff and straight-lined patterns.

A wreath of Rose-buds, or of Rose-buds and blue Hyacinths, would look very pretty ; or a scroll pattern formed of brilliantly coloured little dotty flowers. Nothing large and solid looks half so appropriate as these designs, for carrying in the hand.

In this way we can vary the ground colour, and make the wreath quite different. A ground, for instance, of very pale pink or delicate mauve Verbenas ; yellow Banksian Roses (only by candle-light yellow is apt to look like a dingy white), with a wreath of purple Violets, of small purple Geraniums, or of the purple Lilac. All these grounds might in turn be used, and have wreaths drawn on them respectively of pink, or blue, or white, or—which is very pretty—wreaths in which the thicker parts are marked in colour, while the edges are shaded off into a feathery white. Purple Lilac and Lilies of the Valley are extremely pretty. On a white Chinese Primrose, white Lilac or Deutzia ground, the scarlet Begonia,

again, is very pretty ; and sometimes these patterns look lovely when the ground of the centre is of one flower, and that outside of the wreath of quite a different colour.

7. Flowers are of course continually arranged in a mere succession of round bunches, but they look stiff and unmeaning. Stars, again, are sometimes freely scattered ; but except the self-shaped stars of Jessamine, and flowers of that kind, I have little sympathy with astronomical designs ; indeed, where no form is adopted that admits of shading, I think it is much better merely to form a pretty, well-blended, group.

Sometimes a monogram forms a pretty pattern ; but that would be rather for decorations, or for some large vase.

The monogram should then be cut out in card or zinc ; and I think, perhaps, the easiest plan is to paste two cut-out cards together, so as to form a very solid board, the inside of the cards being cut out all round, so as to make them merely into a stiff kind of frame.

The frame of card being made stiff by pasting, a piece of wire should be taken all round the shape, being carefully bound down all round the edge. A varnish of sealing-wax melted in a little spirit of wine, and applied very hot, does most excellently for preventing the paste from softening when damped ; but it needs extreme care not to let the composition by

any accident take fire. When used cold, the varnish being thinner is longer drying, and sometimes two or three coats may be desirable.

As a general rule, black shows as little as anything on wires, cards, &c., when used with flowers ; but I suppose white sealing-wax could be used, and the varnish would answer better for use amidst white flowers than that made of red or black, or of both mixed for brown.

These frames, fastened firmly by the wires carried down, parasol-like, among the stalks, answer very well for keeping the spaces open that are to be filled with some peculiar colour.

8. Sometimes it is difficult to keep the surface level, if different kinds of flowers are used in forming the ground, and for the pattern on it. It is, however, essential to be very exact both as to shape and flatness. To effect this a tin funnel without a tube—or a card formed into such a shape—is very useful. A stiff bushy piece of green should be placed in the centre of the circle, the top being as flat as possible, so as to be just level with the lip of the funnel, the stalk being long and firm.

9. For the points or circles to be used in a design, a sort of pasteboard frame ought to be constructed ; just fitting in, without going down far into the funnel-shaped frame. A loop of ribbon fastened to this frame serves to draw it out by, when the whole

is finished, and either points converging to the centre or parallel circles can easily be arranged in this way. Sometimes circles arranged thus in ribbons have patterns on them, formed of little gem-like flowers.

It is most essential that the edges in all such groups should be sharply cut and distinct; indeed, sometimes a little frame of card is left underneath the flowers.

CHAPTER VI.

MAKING - U P.

1. TURNING again to our mechanical directions for arranging flowers, flatness, it must be remembered, is a great secret of success, so that in a vase or group the curve should really be very slight indeed, and the flowers carefully kept down to the proper level. Having provided the frame, the next thing to do is to prepare the flowers. If they are for a dish or vase, and if this dish or vase is opaque and can be filled with wet sand, nothing else answers anything like so well. If water must be used, a few large pieces of charcoal are very good preservatives from its becoming disagreeable, and this is far better than using charcoal

dust—the latter causing so much dirt and trouble. The lumps may be employed for an indefinite length of time, and can be washed without inconvenience whenever they require it.

If sand is used, it should, between each using, be thrown into a heap on a tray in the sunshine, to dry and sweeten, and then it should be sifted.

The dish being filled with a heap of sand, fitting under the frame—or a heap of sand would do quite well without a frame at all—the flowers will need no preparation beyond that of cutting off all the foliage up to the point which is to be above the frame or sand, and shortening, if necessary, parts of too long stalks.

2. If the bouquet is for the hand, the flowers will, many of them, need mounting—that is to say, fastening upon longer stems, which is a separate branch of our little art, and has been treated of already. In this case, also, the leaves of all will require removing till they are only left where they grow above the wire level. The frame should now be filled up with green leaves, this having the effect of preserving the flowers longer, and of preventing bareness when they do drop off.

8. Scarlet Geranium leaves are amongst the very best; but all Geranium leaves are good for this purpose, unless their scent should sometimes render them objectionable. The Fair Helen, and, I think, the common Oak-leaved, are very unpleasant to most

people, having such a very strong and unfresh smell. The Ivy-leaved Geraniums, also, though at the first moment one hardly observes it, quite spoil any bouquet by their sickliness when torn or gathered. Of the Spice-scented Geraniums there is one very small and cut-up-leaved kind with a delightful and very delicate perfume like lemons, which is amongst the most desirable. Myrtle is one of the best kinds of foliage to put near the edge, as even the slight pressure of a touch so much brings out its fragrance. Sweetbriar and sweet Verbena (or Lemon plant) both so delightful, are apt to look disfiguringly untidy; and they are, therefore, far the best placed just underneath the frame, where they are reduced to the compulsory modesty of wasting unseen their sweetness, though not, we hope, "upon the desert air." For myself, I far prefer to any other a thick coating arranged in regular rings of nice, crisp, velvety Geranium leaves, or of other evergreens; and they are none the worse for being dipped and agitated under water, as then the foliage is apt to retain some moisture. Young green shoots of other shrubs and plants are always bad, however, as their flagging so soon gives a faded look to all.

4. For arranging the foliage, a long piece of white Berlin wool should be tied to the wire stick, and each separate leaf, if too short to be bound to the centre stalk-wire, should be caught in by that wool. The

coat of network formed by the crossing threads causes no harm at all, and is rather useful than otherwise in retaining moisture.

A little trouble and observation are necessary here, as some leaves will hardly ever fall from their own stems; while others, like Begonias, which are so very beautiful, are by no means unapt to drop away entirely, much to the injury of the place they leave. I always, therefore, think it safest to fasten, for instance, the Begonia footstalks separately—a small piece of the thin green flower-wire, to be bought at all wax-flower makers, answering well for keeping them all safe.

5. It is a vexed question whether flowers answer better when the arrangement is commenced from within or from without. I believe there is no doubt that, for dishes and vases, beginning from the outside and working inwards is the best plan, laying a frill of leaves at the edge at first, and then arranging, as just described, all the leaves required for the lining. But for flowers for carrying in the hand, I think the central commencement is best; it is almost impossible otherwise to secure the stalks sufficiently firm to keep them in their places.

For these, therefore, beginning at the central flower or green, it is better generally to carry the wool separately round each separate flower as it is wound on, going straight round the bouquet; and

here a little knack is required to turn it round evenly, and to keep up the proper level.

6. In mixed arrangements, of course, there is a constant exercise of one's own taste, and of the correctness of one's eye for colour ; but I think there are few cases where it is not safer to begin by excluding from the basket all the flowers which common sense assures us never, under any circumstances, can really harmonize. When we are actually arranging we are not fair judges—because a very lovely pink flower is so pretty ; and what harm can it do to put in that charming Rose ? But when the scarlets begin to gather thickly, we sometimes regret that we were not more difficult to be tempted. In that case it still is possible to correct the mistake by cutting the flower off short, and forcing a mounted one down on a piece of stick : but still, as such tempting flowers are generally the prettiest, it is a pity ; and we wish they were once more back upon the tree.

I need not go on, however, writing of these arrangements, having so often to give such minute directions for them in the designs ; I will only add, therefore, that it is always necessary to bear in mind what follows after as well as what goes before, in respect of colours.

For the vases, &c., when arranging the flowers in them, it is very essential, if the flowers are large,

that no two flowers, or sprays of foliage, should be exactly over each other's heads, so as to give the appearance of streakiness, or of formal lines. A circle having been formed all round the outer edge, whether of different colours or of a single colour, the flowers or leaves should be carefully arranged in the second row, so as to come between each two rather than over any. The number, therefore, of the first row should be uneven; and afterwards, if the flowers are large, between every two others may be sufficient to place the succeeding flower in some rows; the length of each row, of course, shortening materially as it draws towards the middle.

Drooping flowers have a very pretty effect, and they will often serve to break the formality of any lines like those above named.

CHAPTER VII.

BOUQUETS.

1. It has been often noticed that many persons are apt to think of getting a great variety of flowers for a bouquet, taking a great deal of pains and trouble to procure for it about fifty sprays of all kinds of charming things—new kinds of Geraniums and grand new Fuchsias, sprays of Heath and Epazotis, and many beautiful flowers besides; yet when

the group is finished, and has cost no small amount either of time or money, it somehow or other is not half so striking as they hoped it would be : there are a great many flowers, very pretty flowers, but "rather crowded somehow," and not exactly a match, such as flowers should be, for the dress with which they are to be associated.

Now, I have always been told that, both in wreaths and bouquets, there should be some one distinct, bright colour, and one, generally white, in direct contrast with it. Sometimes a third colour comes in, too, most charmingly ; but this may be or not : in fact, the green of the foliage is in all cases there.

2. The first great rule then, is, I believe, whatever colour we do adopt, to be most strict in the exclusion of all but the one precise shade we choose. Supposing scarlet and white are to be the colours, having chosen one good scarlet, not the slightest variation can possibly be allowed—not a single flower that does not match the rest, not even a vestige of crimson, and not a shade of pink. In a regularly-arranged shape, at any rate, it would be most destructive, and in any shape each flower put in which is not of one of the two ruling shades rather detracts from, than adds to, the brilliancy of the whole. This can easily be tried by putting two or three purple flowers into a vase of red and white : it is quite surprising to find how many more are wanted at once to "fill" it.

8. For a scarlet and white bouquet I should proceed as follows:—Having procured a stiff, bushy piece of small-leaved Myrtle, or, failing that, of the common Box or Privet, I should fasten an end of strong white worsted firmly to the stem, tying in any small stray shoots, and making it fairly firm together. In very many cases—if, for instance, the centre flower be a Rose or a Geranium—it is well to dip the foundation in water, and then just to shake it free from superfluous drops. Besides this precaution the flowers should always be gathered early, before the mid-day sun has shone upon them; for if then put in water in a cool, dark cupboard, or under a dish-cover in a cool place, they will last much longer than if quite freshly gathered.

Taking a white Rose—or, perhaps, a branch of Azalea, or a Geranium, or a white Chrysanthemum—for the centre flower, a very narrow strip of thin leather, or of oilskin, or of something waterproof, should be neatly rolled round the stem, just turning up the end at last. For Azaleas, a touch of gum water or dissolved isinglass put underneath the flower where it joins its outer cup, or calyx, is a great preservative; and for Geraniums I am told a drop let fall into the flower preserves them beautifully.

Roses are, perhaps, the worst centre flowers, in a general way, as they are so very apt to shed their

petals, and I do not know any means of preserving them entire by using gum. But three or four little bunches of common white Lilac, broken from the large bunch, and fastened together rather flatly with a short length of fine wire (green flower-wire is the very best), make a charming dead mass of white; and this flower is easily forced, too, in the winter season. Next to this I think some drooping white flowers the prettiest of all—white Heath or Deutzia, in the early summer time—only about three sprays, and a few little branches of any light lively green. These (flowers and green) having been wound on carefully with the long end of worsted, the next proceeding would be to add a row of scarlet (or of pink, or blue, or lilac, or cerise, or whatever the colour is to be), either interspersed with white, when the edges are wished to be broken, or as a geometrical line, which should be most exactly distinct and even; these should gradually be shaded off into a light green edging.

The Poinsettia is a very beautiful hot-house plant for winter bouquets, and the *Begonia fuchsioides* almost more so, with its coral drops. Still, when the right idea of colour is once secured, very many pretty and effective substitutes may easily be found. Scarlet berries even, in little groups, the common Scarlet Geraniums, or the cerise kinds; while, though scarlet single Anemones and dwarf red Van-Thol single Tulips

are about the last flowers one would expect to find useful for such a purpose, they are in fact amongst the most brilliant possible, and also amongst the most lasting of all our flowers.

4. Here I ought to caution any of my readers, who may try these styles, that they ought just to pass a needle and thread through any berries that they wear, or make them perfectly secure with gum or melted isinglass, to a little green silk ribbon underneath the stalk; because they are not otherwise at all safe from falling. Tulips and Anemones, it must also be remembered, will shut up in the dark, or during a coldish drive, and will open widely again in the light and warmth.

Their colours by candle-light are most beautiful: pink, and white, and pale blue Anemones, are all extremely pretty. I cannot say too often how much more *recherché* an effect is given by artistic taste in the choice of colours, than by a grand assortment of "fine cut flowers" put together "anyhow."

5. Variegated foliage is sometimes very pretty in bordering such bouquets. Begonia leaves, especially, come in delightfully; but where the whole foliage has to be first arranged, keeping a flat head of leafage, the foliage of the Scarlet and Unique Geraniums comes in very well, while the stalk of each separate flower can be thrust down through it. The green thus shows with good effect, and

a red and white border has an extremely good appearance.

Three distinct rows—that is, say, centre, rose colour; first row, white, or white and blue; second row, to match the centre; and the outside mixed—are generally enough, with a pretty fringing edge of Fern, or some nice drooping leaves, to finish off the whole.

6. I now propose to name a few of the prettiest and most effective designs, for special bouquets of flowers, that I can remember.

They may all be made most easily, and mostly of common flowers, when more rare and costly luxuries are not easily to be procured.

1st Pattern.—No leaves whatever, except around the edge, where Fern leaves are introduced; centre white Camellias; rows, half the diameter of the centre, flower, formed alternately of purple and white violets, or a wedge-like pattern of purple and white converging to the centre. In this arrangement the flowers are made up on a net-work frame, or else the spaces are marked out with little walls of cardboard, afterwards removed. Any colours, and any suitable flowers, can be substituted readily for the white and purple violets. The centre flower, however, must exactly match in shade with one of the two employed, *and must be exactly round.*

7. *2nd Pattern.*—Again, without much foliage, only a coloured wreath on a ground of white, or else a

white wreath on colour, and a wide and waving border of green leaves.

With a white wreath, the ground may be precisely of those flowers which we can get most easily.

Snowdrops, Lilies of the Valley, or little sprays of Heath or Deutzia, may form the little wreath; and pink Heath, lilac or mauve Verbenas, scarlet Geraniums, or crimson or pink Roses, Violets, or Primroses, may any one of them be used as a ground.

The ground should be first begun; and, supposing it to be pale pink, and the wreath a green and white one, it would answer very well to have one large pure white flower in the centre, with little branches of surrounding green, or Lilies like the wreath, breaking and softening its clear cut edge.

If the ground is white, and the wreath is of scarlet, a red Camellia, with sprays of Heath to match, is a most perfect centre.

The bouquet should be made up firmly, just as usual, till it comes to the wreath itself; then every flower should be placed with the greatest care, filling up with white or letting the colours of the wreath appear, so that the due effect is by some means wrought.

After the wreath there should be a band of ground colour, rather wider than the wreath itself; and then, with the usual fringe of green and white, the outer circle is perfectly finished off.

8. A very pretty Rose group is formed of the white Banksia, and the pink little Rose de Meaux; and then a fringe of Lilies of the Valley, and pale Bluebells, finishes it off in a most graceful manner.

A small, stiff, central bunch of green, which one sometimes calls a faggot, is first prepared as usual; three of the pretty pink Roses are carefully sought out and mounted in a spray, the heads being closely arranged together, and then should come a few of the pure white Lilies, with just two or three of their smallest leaves peeping up as well, encircling the Roses; and a wide even circle, two or three of the soft white Roses deep. The edge of the band, keeping very even, succeeds the Lilies.

So far for the first circle. The second, after a frill or edging again of the pretty Lilies, should be a mass of Rose de Meaux. Sweet little Roses indeed they are (and, oh! so charming for a dwarf Rose-hedge!) They should be closely set together, level at the top, even in their adjustment, and wider a little than the row before.

Thirdly comes the border of double width, in which I hardly can tell how to arrange the flowers—all ways are so pretty when the flowers are such as these I speak of now. I think I should mix them entirely—white and pink Roses, Lilies, and Blue-bells, all being joined in a mingled band. And yet it would look so pretty with first white and then

pink—each row divided with those perfectly lovely Lilies, and the sky-blue Blue-bells also in a wide final edging, with Fern and Lily leaves to finish off the whole.

9. I have now to describe some modes of arranging bridal bouquets.

It is, however, far more difficult to arrange white flowers well than to do those which give the help of colour, and some of the difficulties are by no means easily described; though I will do my best to point out the principal things that are essential in them.

Every one knows that there are shades of white—we may call them three—the yellow, blue, and pink tinge; and there is, also, the perfectly snow white, which is of all the loveliest.

The grand thing is to get plenty of this snow white, and then to add whichever one of the other colours may be preferred. The pink tinge, if not more than that of a blush rose, is the most effective; but it must not be allowed to be deeper than the rosy tint of a pale pink shell.

I do not think any other colour is really good for bridal flowers. Other colours require a more decided shade; and even the beautiful blue, quite alone with white, would look rather poor. The only way, perhaps, in which it comes in well, is as a fringe of blue encroaching here and there on the perfect white, and running all round it in little sprays of blue. I

once saw a very pretty white bouquet thus edged round with blue. I am not certain now what the flowers were, but they had exactly the effect of pale *Nemophilas*, or *Forget-me-not* ; and I think the latter would be, at least, *ben trovato*. These blue flowers peeped out like little stars amidst a shower of the lightest Ferns.

The mention of the Ferns brings to mind one of the chief objects in introducing colour ; and, unless this is attended to, the green itself is hard to keep sufficiently in the background. It will be seen at once that an ordinary bouquet, deprived of its gayer flowers, would be at once green and white ; and this we have to guard against. At the same time, green is essential—no bouquet should be without it ; and I think the best way of avoiding this serious difficulty, is to have flowers to which green belongs so naturally, that they can scarcely be deprived of it. White Clematis, Snowdrops, Banksia Roses, Flowering Myrtle, strike me at once as amongst the number ; and even here I prefer naming the common flowers—unsurpassable, indeed, in loveliness, but such as all must know. Almost all flowers, however, have some green of their own, which cannot be separated mentally from the flowers when they are seen together.

The white Rose, for instance, with the spray peeping up beside it ; the white Camellia, with its large

shiny leaf; the Lily of the Valley, with its snowy bells lying in their cool sheath. If we want green—and we must have green—it should be brought in thus.

Perhaps this is one reason why it is often well to make up such bouquets piece by piece on the smallest and lightest sticks, adding to each flower its own peculiar green, and then grouping them together with a filling-up of Clematis, or white Heath, or something similar. White Jessamine is not amongst the most desirable, as the flowers drop so readily. A ground of Lilies of the Valley would, I think, look extremely lovely. White Violets would do tolerably, though the effect would be perhaps too broken. White Geraniums do well; and double Chinese Primroses are only so far objectionable that they are a little stiff, and perhaps somewhat solid. I have seen white Azaleas, also, answer very beautifully. Perhaps Camellias, Azaleas, Lilies, and Orange blossoms, are the very best things to have; but it does not do to use Azaleas for the filling-up, or ground, unless they are smaller than the principal flowers used.

I will now proceed to give three or four separate designs for Bridal Bouquets, which may be done very shortly, taking for granted the explanations above.

1st. A perfectly white design. Centre Camellia, Azaleas gathered round it, but yet put in lightly,

and without trying to force a quite level surface, which is nearly impossible, and here undesirable. Five more Camellias at intervals, mixed again with a few of the largest Azaleas, standing lightly. A few Orange flowers may be interspersed, and then Lilies of the Valley, or white Heath, or Clematis. If the former, a few leaves of their own may be used, but they should be of the youngest and palest kind, belonging to roots which have not flowered, and should only just show their heads between the Lilies and their surrounding flowers. If Clematis or Heath is used, the Orange flowers and some Lilies may be mingled with it; but in these snow white groups a very little green tells quite sufficiently, and no separate foliage need be used at all. The small pale green fronds of the Maiden-hair could hardly, however, fail to add some grace and lightness, whatever might be the centre.

In arranging all these flowers it is very essential not to cut off the leaves a little below the flower as far as they are good; they tend to keep the arrangement lighter, and also to obviate the appearance of unnaturalness in removing green.

2nd. White, edged with blue. In this arrangement a little more green is to be admitted in the central part; it also will bear somewhat heavier flowers, such as the Double Primrose; and Banksia Roses look very well in this case. They ought, however, to

be mingled with larger flowers—Roses or Camellias. The half-opened Gardenias, and the delightful thick-petalled Stephanotis, are also amongst the most charming flowers that can be employed.

The last line should be of small broken sprays, mingling with blue. Lobelia, Forget-me-not, small Campanula, and (prettiest almost of all) blue Harebells, might make this border, which should break into a waving fringe of Fern. When Fern is used, the beautiful little Harebells seem to be quite at home, shaded by it, and peeping out amongst it.

For a blush bouquet, the smaller flowers should be quite white, and only a few half-open Roses tinted; or the flowers should be white, with a very delicate mixture of the palest pink-tinged Rose-buds. The Multiflora Roses are amongst the best to use in this way, their long tapering buds having such a waxen look.

Many Camellias and Azaleas have the faint stripe or shade of rose I speak of. In these cases, of course, care must be taken to have a sufficiency of real snowy white, and so to arrange it as to make it harmonious.

In any case where flowering Myrtle is used, it should be continued, or at least repeated several times. It is, however, rather too dark a green for a quite white bouquet.

10. For the last design, I will describe a nosegay

of mixed flowers, in which we are chiefly governed by the flowers we have. I am quite sure this is a frequently occurring case, for which it will therefore be useful to provide; though, of course, it is rather necessity than choice that causes us to have such naturally ill-assorted flowers. Still, I have seen them look really very well.

We will suppose that we have a basket of Scarlet Geraniums, pink Roses, dark crimson Verbenas, blue and yellow flowers of some kinds, and a few white ones also. Some are, in such cases, in the habit of arranging all the less brilliant colours, and then putting in here and there a dash of scarlet, or of bright primrose colour, to enliven all, gradually bringing the brightness up to the edge—that is to say, increasing the amount of scarlet or yellow as it comes near the edge—and this, certainly, in some cases, has a decidedly good effect. And though the quantity of flowers used is very great, they are generally of kinds that are very plentiful.

Where a dense mass of flowers can be thus afforded, every colour in the rainbow may, by a tasteful arranger, be brought in very well. I have heard, for instance, a beautiful “flower-dresser” (French), ask for two morsels of bright yellow, and two or three little pieces of anything that is blue, just because, as she said, she had none of these amidst all her other flowers. She took good care, however,

to put at least *two* of each, the smallest dot of colour even though it might be.

Once in November, when a sudden frost had, late in a beautiful October, annihilated almost every flower within reach of a sudden demand for some, I saw one of the best bouquets I remember arranged under difficulties of so grave a kind. Scarlet Geraniums, a few white Roses, and a handful of the common China, were absolutely all the flowers that were at command. The centre then had one white Rose, and I think there were four or five sprays of scarlet, rather below the Rose level, round it: at least, I fancy that it was in this arrangement that these flowers appeared. Still their use must depend a little on their own rich deep colour, and on the paleness of the pink Roses near them. After the centre came the pink Roses, all gathered together with very little green, and then the white Roses were grouped around at nearly regular intervals, filled up with very fresh-coloured green, shading from light into dark. Behind each Rose, too, there was a little foliage; and then came one close, dense mass, of Scarlet Geranium, finished by a border of its own velvety leaves. Altogether it looked so pretty, and the poverty of the material was at the same time so evident, that I really doubt if there was any one in the room that evening who did not lament the want of knowledge which had prevented her from rivalling that much-admired bouquet.

There is a Geranium, but I grieve to say I do not know its name, which is in itself a bouquet ; and it flowers so charmingly all through the later autumn and the winter season, that I know few plants that are more invaluable. It is a low-growing, almost creeping kind, with very soft, velvety; dark leaves, quite as dark often as those of a Myrtle, cut into somewhat of an Oak-leaved shape, only hardly so far divided, and jagged in some degree around the outer edge. The flowers, growing on the shortest of footstalks, are of a deep rich crimson, veined with black, and very small and close-growing. It is very old ; I knew it as much as fifteen years ago, and then we always called it " The Old Geranium ;" and it was continually, in those days, worked on cloth, velvet leaves being cut out and laid on with a little gum, and crimson cloth sewed with black floss silk for the beautiful little flowers !

A frame, covered with the beautiful drooping sprays of this peculiarly lovely plant, with its short glowing crimson blossoms starting up amongst the leaves, is, indeed, most charming, and for making such a nosegay but little skill is wanted.

CHAPTER VIII.

WREATHS.

1. WREATHS of mixed flowers are difficult to manage. A delicate eye for combining colour, and the lightest of hands for arranging flowers, are required to prevent their turning out clumsy garlands.

Few things, however, are more worthy of a little pains being taken in acquiring the knack of making them ; this, too, is done so easily ; they are so pretty, so many like them, and often they give such pleasure to those who have not seen them, or who do not know how to make them for themselves.

The flowers, too, are so very few and simple which are required for them. It is, indeed, an expensive mistake to fancy that so many flowers and such grand kinds are wanted. For the hair, even, and for the dress, how well I remember those charming simple little *gracieuses* wreaths—Ivy, or evergreen Rose leaves, or Myrtle, and beautiful dark or silvered foliage, a few Snowdrops, or some drooping Deutzia—that little flower like a delicate white Ribes ; a few pale blue Harebells, single Hepaticas, Scillas, or bells of waxen Hyacinths ; Pansies again, and Roses, Azaleas amongst the fairest, and the exquisite Chinese Honeysuckle, and little sprays of Lilac.

Two or three waving Fern leaves and bunches of

drooping Snowdrops, the Snowdrops sprinkled here and there amongst the smaller Fern leaves as well as at the sides—what can be prettier, and what can be more easily arranged ?

2. In the mixed wreaths, too, where a line of some dark evergreen supports little knots of flowers, perhaps white and red Geraniums, mixed with their own small soft velvet leaves—expanding at the sides into a waving plume, or rising in the centre into a crown of flowers—are amongst the best.

The easiest, I think, to make, are those of one flower, and they are much the prettiest. At this very instant I remember one so pretty, that I cannot resist describing it instead of the mixed *jardinière*.

3. It was of Thorn blossom, scarlet and white ; the white May or Hawthorn looking exquisitely fair and pearly, and both kinds continuing long unfaded. Dark Rose leaves, like those of the Banksia, on their own green supple stems, are the best for the foundation.

If Rose shoots cannot be met with readily, two long branches of Periwinkle form the best of stems : the leaves are evergreen, and the stems are moist and green. I have heard that taking out a little of the pith, and, through the slit-up bark, grafting in the Mayflower-stalks, answers well for keeping the flowers the fresher. However that may be, a few little bunches of the half-open Hawthorn, with here and there a single spray of scarlet or of crimson, do look very

lovely mounted on the bine. The green foundation stems should be tied together with a piece of green Berlin wool, beginning always at the upper end and working towards the root end. The first tiny piece of May being laid upon the stem, the wool should be wound on down it, and after three or four rounds a slipknot should be firmly drawn to render the flower steady.

Next should come a little spray of green—Rose leaves answer best ; and then, again, more May, in double or triple groups, with one or two of the bright little scarlet clusters.

The flowers should not be arranged too closely, but bound on at short intervals, broken by the smaller buds and green ; and at the centre or sides, where a degree of fullness and of massiveness is required, the flowers should be arranged in small knots before they are mounted on the stem itself.

Each side would require about three knots of flowers ; and they should be arranged either with perfect exactness as to colour and place, or without any attempt at all at evenness.

In wreaths like this many persons are in the habit of winding a very narrow green ribbon evenly down the stem, folding it frequently in a slope, to induce it to lie smooth.

4. For the head, or for hanging, German-like, on a picture-frame, the wreath is often made most easily

by beginning at each end, and working towards the centre. When a high coronal is to fill the centre, its knots of flowers serve to unite the two sides; where the centre is small, the join is best at the commencement of the side groups. When the May blossoms have been gathered early in the morning they should be put in water in a shady place, not in great branches; but the little heads, three inches long or so, should be cut off and put in water separately.

We should never handle the flowers much; the lightest touch being sufficient to bruise and bend them.

CHAPTER IX.

FLOWERS FOR DINNER TABLES.

1. HAVING already given such very small details as to frame-work, mounting, making up, &c., for flower-vases in general, there is now little left to do but just to name the special flowers, and describe the designs, for some dinner-vases. I shall generally name a whole set together; but any one requiring only three or so, can very easily select some to suit their purpose, and adapted for the kind of flowers which they may have to use.

I will suppose that there are generally one large centre, two or four next size, and perhaps some

smaller vases, to be filled with flowers, and will first describe an arrangement of Roses which I know to be very beautiful, and which is also most easily arranged. One large wide central vase is required here—a low-spreading basket borne up by Parian figures, or supported on a stand, looks very well in this way; four smaller vases should, in a measure, correspond with the centre; and six, ten, or fourteen smaller ones, may be used as well.

2. In some cases—as in impromptu dinners in sea-side or country sojourns—where, perhaps, the flowers are the only materials really in abundance, it may be amusing to know how to make them useful; and a wonderfully beautiful display may, indeed, be wrought at a little expense of most pleasant labour, and by the exercise of a little taste, or—as the people “there” would probably call it—*gumption*. A range of glass milk-pans—price from sixpence upwards—or an array of soup plates supported on finger-glasses, have been known to represent a splendid dessert service in a most effective manner—Sycamore leaves, and Plane leaves, the spreading foliage of beautiful Acacias, leaves of Water Lilies, Ferns, gathered on the hill-sides, and many other beautiful shapes of green, utterly concealing the poverty of their supports.

I hope that this may prove a useful hint, and lead to further attempts to beautify common things; for whatever may be thought of cheap and vulgar *finery*,

there is no such thing existing as vulgar beauty, though it may be cheap.

8. I will now proceed to the Rose arrangement, only premising that in such a case as that above alluded to the green must be looked upon as a simple addition, just as if it were a part of the vase itself. The central vase, of course, requires the largest and most *prononcés* flowers, the four smaller ones ranking next to it in size. For the larger vase, then, the *Gréant des Batailles* Rose is one of the very best, and of the most brilliant crimson. Placed three or four together in the centre of the centre vase, it might be surrounded with white Moss, or Provence, or some other pure white Rose; long sprays of small white-clustered Roses, mixed with those of the lovely crimson *Pæstum*, or of some like briary kind, hanging about the edge and mingling with the white.

Pretty healthy foliage is far more important for this than flowers. Still some beautiful clusters might well be wired on stalks possessing better foliage than their own might be. Many of the very small briar Roses are so exquisitely lovely, that even the Wild Rose sprays would be far from out of place.

For the centre vase a pointed design, or a thick band of crimson and white alternately, where such designs are wished for, would also do very well, instead of the simply-mingled bouquet; with, in the former case, little foliage; in the latter, much. Two of the

other larger vases should be in similar colours, and of a corresponding design, all circles, or all grouped; but if crimson is the ruling colour in the centre piece, white should be so with them—or the reverse, if otherwise. The Rose foliage, or Rose leaves and Ferns alone, should be also used exclusively for all.

The side vases need not match in any way, though all should contain either white or crimson as one of their colours. Crimson delicately shaded into pink would be very beautiful, placed alternately with white shaded into rose. The various flowers must be chosen, however, with great precision, as so many, especially of the year-or-two-old Roses, have so heavy a tinge of bluish lilac. In the centre of each side there might be a vase of the palest Tea Roses, arranged lightly amidst their foliage as for a drawing-room vase, and relieved by a border of the very palest pink.

Of course, the vases down each side of the table must match; if a different centre is therefore used, the number of pairs of side vases must be uneven.

4. I will next describe a very graceful and most cool looking arrangement for a dinner table in the hottest time of the London season, when cool and refreshing things are most to be desired.

In this design, both vases and arrangement conspire

to the same end—the vases being made all of frosted glass and of crystal dew-drops, for the especial purpose of looking really ice-like.

These vases are of the shape of which the Frontispiece represents the largest: they are made by Philipps, in Oxford Street, and will, I think, become very popular on account not only of their perfect coolness, but also because of the ease and convenience of separating entirely the flowers and the fruit, while still obtaining the full embellishment that each gives to the table, the perfect facility afforded for the cleaning, and the useful attribute of holding much or little fruit and few or many flowers.

As I designed, or rather adapted, these vases, from one for flowers, bought, a short time ago, at Philipps's shop in Bond Street, I have, of course, tried their capabilities in many ways: my own object having been to compete for the prize at Kensington Gore for table decoration: for which attempt, unluckily, I was too late in the field last year.

5. My idea, in the design of these, was that while presenting a pile of fruit lying on cool thick leaves, such as might be disturbed as readily as that in any other fruit dish, the flowers or ferns above would make a gracefully waving shade, without interrupting at all the view across the table—which is such a great discomfort.

6. The accidental advantage of a few sprays

of Fern, and wreaths of drooping Roses, being sufficient flowers; and the wide limit left for much or little fruit, while producing the same effect in either case, will, I think, make the arrangement useful for either large or small requirements.

The vases, being simply made of glass, are also very pretty for the drawing-room table when entirely filled with flowers.

I will now proceed to describe some of the flowers that I have found best suited for these kinds of vases.

7. It seems to me that *height* should not be attempted. A good arrangement is to place first in the vase either a branch of Rose-leaves or a bushy piece of Myrtle, or such-like green, just to fill the centre without standing up, and to keep the flowers and leaves properly in their places.

The Ferns will always then wave widely enough around; and a few sprays of Heath or Epacris, graceful blue and white bell-shaped flowers, such as the Campanulas and beautiful Lily tribes, Wistarias, again, and the pale Rose Acacias, are most exquisite, both for leaves and flowers, if laid in large, fan-like layers all round the vase.

8. Few things would be actually more fresh and beautiful than vases filled with white and rose Acacias; the central and larger bouquet combining both amidst their own pale leaves. Wistarias and Laburnums even would be beautiful, where a pretty

simple group was all that was required. Roses, Fuchsias, Lilies, and Passion-flowers; the lovely wreaths of the Peruvian climbing Lily, or rose-coloured Lapageria; sprays of drooping Orchids and of summer climbers; even the great white Bind-weed wreathed around the stem—all these would be beautiful.

9. Sometimes, again, the places might be reversed; and grapes having been placed to hang from the upper vase with their long wreaths of leaves, the dish below might be filled with water-lilies floating in their own wave.

10. A design which always answers very well, is, however, the first mentioned Ferns; placed lightly and yet abundantly to droop around the vase, and to over-shade the white and purple grapes in the dish below. Perhaps the loveliest vase that I ever saw, contained Ferns alone; but then that was in the very hottest weather, when green fresh foliage was so refreshing.

11. In colder weather, more red becomes desirable, and rose-coloured and white Camellias, Heaths and red Poinsettias, Hyacinths and red Tulips, are amongst the flowers to which we have to fly.

Then, again, we may take to the lower dish; and filling it with Hyacinths, with snowdrops, moss, and blue-bells, we may make such a dish as will last us half the winter.

A zinc pan made to fit into the dish, either in two pieces or passing overhead, would answer for this most perfectly.

12. I have, however, two special arrangements to recommend at present.

The first is all Roses.

The dishes, in all cases, being filled with fruit grouped around the stem, the Roses have to be arranged above in their own many shades.

White Banksia Rose is lovely for entwining part of the stem itself; and then the common shell-tinted Ruga Rose, the exquisitely shaped Noisettes, and the long Multifloras, the old sweet Pæstum, or the shaded Blaria, are at once very common and abundant everywhere, and first-rate for beauty.

Tea Roses, Moss Roses, the Provence and the various kinds of Chinese Roses, all give many flowers worthy of a place; but those which I named first deserve some pre-eminence for their dark healthy foliage, as well as for their beauty and their sweetness.

Suppose the central vase to be grouped with crimson Roses, or the sweet pink moss-roses, gathered in the centre—large clusters of the drooping Banksias all around the edge, and little bunches of pink flowers like the centre Rose here and there appearing—the dish below might be heaped with purple grapes, surrounded at the top by a wreath of their own leaves. The other vases might then well contain white Roses,

and these might be broken up with red and crimson flowers; while bright red fruit beneath, peeping out through leaves, would continue the brilliant colour.

Smaller vases standing all round the table might be filled with fairy roses, the sweet little *Rose de Meaux*, and the white *Noisettes*, so exquisite for those baskets which white little china figures carry upon their heads.

18. Another, but a wintry design, for decking out these vases, looks, I know, most brilliant, and can be arranged most easily.

A thick fringe of green is laid in the centre vase, and all around it runs a ring of waving sprays of *Heath* or *Hyacinths*, of the palest rose and white.

Next to these comes a circle of white *Camellias*, or of *Tulips*—four or five are enough—with a fringe of *Fern* leaves made to stand up above them; and then again a group of *Heaths* or *Hyacinths*; while bright rose-coloured *Camellias* or *Tulips* form a sort of crown rising up above. In this design the *Ferns* keep up the wide impression, and take off the appearance of a too great height.

The vases meant to match can be made most charming, either with pink *Hyacinths*, or rose and white *Azaleas*: in the first case, it is better that the leaves should be chiefly at the edge; in the other they

are far better placed in a group together, to over-shade the flowers.

A drooping Orchid spray, or a wreath of some blue or rose-coloured climber, would be a great advantage; though I have known long sprays of creeping moss, or even of the little ivy-leaved trailing plants, look more artistic than any flowers would have done in their place.

14. Drooping flowers and foliage are especially to be desired in vases of the shape already mentioned; and from the kind of glass employed, the green is one of the most effective features. The smaller vases—those at the top and bottom of a table, or at the sides—should in a measure correspond with the centre one, having at least *one* of its colours for the ruling tint.

When the other vases are to be very gay, two, of Fern leaves only, on either side the centre, have a delightful effect.

The other larger groups may contain Azaleas, or Anemones, Camellias or Tulips, reversing the colours used in the largest vase; that is, placing the brightly coloured flowers lower in the vase, and the white ones over.

Of course these arrangements can be always infinitely varied; one thing, however, being observed, especially in cases where the white has the lower place; namely, to place a thick layer of widely spreading green

between it and the vase. A most beautiful arrangement of white china and the beautiful Parian vases was formed of centre figures supporting baskets filled with the two coloured flowers, rose and white, matched with white and rose. A break on each side the table was made by a basket of beautiful mixed Azaleas, and then all round pairs of the little flower-baskets were filled with Primroses and Violets.

An exceedingly pretty and effective arrangement is that recommended in the "The Lady's Guide;" baskets, namely, of gilded or enamelled wicker-work (which should be made very light and open), containing a dish of flowers planted in sand or moss.

This would be a most useful plan for the employment of the "growing bouquets," which I have elsewhere named. I should, however, venture (when the basket is very open) to suggest the use of a white china dish or bowl, rather than of a tin, as the gilded tracery of the basket seen against the china has a good appearance.

White small Hyacinths and rose and white Van Thol Tulips are first-rate flowers for these kind of baskets. The Tulips are most exquisitely tinted with a pale waxen rose colour, and being about six inches high they are more graceful-looking than the pretty and sweet little red Van Thols, though the latter

do charmingly amongst low plants like Primulas. Heaths should always be seen by candle-light before they are selected for dinner-table use, as they vary much according to light.

White and pink Azaleas, blue Achimenes, white corollaed Fuchsias—such as Princess of Prussia and Madame Cornelissen—Roses and Geraniums, are also plants well suited to these baskets. A prettily shaped fountain-like plant looks extremely well with the basket covered with the little blue Lobelia, or some small creeping flower. It does not do for these baskets to mix too many plants, if plants are used in the place of cut flowers.

I cannot forbear from borrowing from the book alluded to a hint which I am afraid my readers will think I ought already to have laid to heart. It certainly is an unfailing rule that nothing is worse taste than a too crowded table, especially one crowded with little trivial pieces. In most cases, however, where more than three or five groups of flowers or plants are used, I take for granted that they are mixed with fruit, as in the vase where a bouquet of Ferns surmounts a pile of grapes, or as in those pretty groups where a china figure stands by a large mass either of fruit or flowers, holding on its head a basket of appropriate leaves and blossoms.

I do not know if others will agree with me in

delighting so much in seeing what may be done with our own common flowers to equal the brilliance of the foreign and most expensive plants. But so far from being [ashamed of them, there is nothing I delight in more than to have people asking about flowers which they do not recognize as inhabitants of their hothouses, and to be able to tell them that they are common garden, or even hedge-row flowers.

CHAPTER X.

FILLING VASES.

1. THE mouth of the vase should be covered with a wire frame, or the vase may be filled with wet sand as usual. If the vase be of china or Parian, the latter mode is by far the best, and the sand can be smoothed down with a spoon.

The flowers to be used will be, perhaps, Verbenas or small crimson Roses, white Syringa, or some clear white substitute, pale blue Hyacinths, or Nemophila, and a profusion of green as usual. White Geraniums look very pretty; and so do long trailing sprays of the ivy-leaved Geranium, drooping from the vase.

Géant des Batailles Rose matches extremely well

with the small crimson Rose, and is larger and more solid for the central flower. As a general rule, the centre and the edge should repeat each other. One or three Roses look well in the centre, with Rose leaves round them; and Roses again all round the edge, arranged in threes, have a good effect.

A scarlet Geranium ground is very pretty, with white Geranium in a sort of wreath all round; a scarlet Cactus is then magnificent, a little raised up for the centre flower; or a large white Lily on a scarlet ground, with a white wreath round it. †

Scarlet Anemones, again, and double crimson Tulips, represent Roses lastingly and effectively. With scarlet, yellow cannot so well be used; but some white drooping flower—Clematis, for instance—must droop upon the edge. With crimson we may try if the palest Primrose is allowable; blue would be better, but yellow Banksia Roses are so very tempting. There should be little green visible, except just at the edge.

A very charming group may be composed of Orchids; but with Cyclamens and Passion-flowers, and many pretty flowers of the bulb class, much the same effect of waxen blossoms, and delicate light sprays of beautiful starry flowers, may easily be produced.

2. Camellias are always beautiful beyond almost all other flowers, for any of the arrangements which require a certain massiveness and grandeur. When

these beautiful flowers are used for shapes or devices, the colours arranged in massive rings or points look far better than when they are broken into patterns of a more fanciful description.

In forming formal shapes, points, stars, fleurs-de-lis, &c., it is a good plan, having drawn the pattern upon a card, to cut it out sharply with a pen-knife, so as to take out the pattern; and then, placing the card on the sand, the flowers destined to form the pattern should be exactly fitted into its shape.

Much depends upon touch and hand, as to which is the better plan—to form a groundwork, occupying the places for patterns with the cut-out card shapes, or to fill in first the pattern with flowers, and afterwards do the ground. I incline much to leaving spaces only, arranging first the ground.

3. I will now give a few hints for vases of *Verbenas*, which may be made very brilliant; though in this case it should be a pattern device, the flowers themselves not being of a very graceful outline. *Verbenas* are useful flowers, as from June to November any garden can be well supplied with them. Heavy rains, indeed, do sadly dash their brightness, but an awning or a few bell-glasses can always preserve many blooms in beauty.

I think for *Verbenas* a rather stiff arrangement is almost inevitable. They may be divided into points, for which mode their variety of shades makes them

very suitable. A white ground looks very well, with the encircling points shaded from crimson into the very palest pink, and then with a centre again shaded down at the edge to the faintest blush.

Some persons make points of varying shades : for instance, if there are sixteen, they would have the first and ninth of the darkest possible tinge ; the second, eighth, tenth, and sixteenth, the next darkest ; the third, seventh, eleventh, and fifteenth, the next ; the fourth, sixth, twelfth, and fourteenth, the lightest except one ; and the fifth and thirteenth, the very lightest possible.

The flowers should in all these cases be fitted as closely as possible into the frame of card, and the petals should be mowed off evenly—I cannot find a better word—with a sharp knife or scissors, up to the exact edge thus indicated, if they stray beyond it.

There may be a thin line all round of white, and a very dark purple or very pale mauve ground ; or there may be a white ground only, intervening between the inward-pointing edge and the centre, which should be similarly arranged with the same number of points, pointing exactly to, or in between, the others.

The green for these Verbena vases is difficult to select. I think that Geranium leaves do as well as any ; and sometimes, perhaps, an edging of Geranium foliage coming over the edge might have just underneath it a row of drooping Fuchsias, harmonising in

colour with the Verbenas, and at the same time giving in some degree the grace of form they want.

In this case the lighter Fuchsias should correspond with the darker points, and the darker Fuchsias with the light Verbenas. The shades not being likely to exactly match, this reversal is far preferable to having the contrast brought more prominently forward.

4. The Fuchsias and Verbenas that are to be used by candlelight should always be previously *tried* in that light. Sometimes the white Fuchsias look very dead, indeed they always do so if there is the faintest tinge of green about their petals; the Verbenas also sometimes appear extraordinarily dull, as the purple flowers look slaty or nearly black, while the crimson flowers take a deeply purple hue.

The pale mauve, too, varies much; but when the exact shade which retains its proper delicate appearance can be found out, it is a very pretty and very soft-looking ground for what may be made an extremely brilliant and very tasteful group.

CHAPTER XI.

DISHES OF FLOWERS FOR DRAWING-ROOM
TABLES. .

1. EVERY one knows and likes, I think, those dishes of drawing-room flowers—masses on which the eye looks down as they stand on some side table, or fill a jardinière. For forming these charming ornaments, a large glass or china dish is necessary, about two inches deep, and without a rim—that is, in form like a gigantic saucer. This dish should have a second edge, divided off parallel to the other. I fear they are not to be bought ready-made in this shape; but this is a difficulty that might soon be overcome, as glass Hyacinth dishes have been made already, which is a step in the desired direction. The chief difficulty in filling these dishes, is to cover the edge perfectly; and, without making the flowers look heavy, to prevent any gaps occurring, when the leaves become disposed to curl up and dry.

2. For many years I used a common soup-plate; the next improvement was to have a tin circular dish with the second edge that I just now mentioned, the space between the inner and outer circles being filled with very fine soil. There is no doubt that cocoa-nut refuse would be the right material with which to fill it; but, as this is very light, and floats

on water, it should be covered, or slightly mixed with a little sand. One of the creeping *Lycopodiums* should then be planted all round the edge, so as to grow quickly and thickly all over round it; and it is a very good plan to have several of these rings made separately from the dishes, and kept always growing, so that one or another might be used at pleasure. *Lycopodium stoloniferum*, and *L. denticulatum*, are two of the best to use; and their green hue is very dark and pleasant, though in the country many of our own woodside mosses might be introduced with striking results—they are so very beautiful, with their vivid green.

3. If nothing of this sort be practicable, or rather if there be time to take the necessary trouble, the most charming of all effects is produced by a little German wreath of very small neat foliage, made up on a well-soaked roll of wool, or (which is far safer for the worker's fingers) thoroughly soaked altogether after it is made up, and then thoroughly drained on a coarse soft cloth. With this precaution, it will, probably, be quite harmless on a table-cover or stand; otherwise the plate and wreath can rest on a green-covered piece of zinc, which should, in that case, be edged occasionally with a fresh row of leaves—small Ivy leaves looking very well, and Camellia leaves being of all kinds the most lasting. By drying these leaves before using them, or similarly preparing Fern

or Moss, this outer row might be easily made permanent.

4. The wreath is composed of very small sprays or branchlets of Spruce Fir, sprays of Ivy and Myrtle (which latter are among the most suitable), and little pieces of Arbor Vitæ, or of Box and Laurustinus.

Geranium leaves, though they are, strictly speaking, evergreen, do not do well for this purpose ; the leaves requiring to be of a more leathery texture, and of a darker green colour. Very young shoots are also better avoided generally, because of their liability to fade or droop too speedily.

The little sprays, when chosen, have to be carefully deprived of all shrivelled or broken leaves ; and a handful being taken together, they should be whisked to and fro in a large bowl of water for some moments, and afterwards laid on a dry cloth till their turn comes for use.

The foundation "bines" having been selected, (the evergreen Chinese Honeysuckle answering well for this, or a long spray of the Banksia Rose), the wreath has to be proceeded with, as we have before described ; each separate piece of green being bound upon the bine, and arranged so as to make a prettily-managed contrast of foliage and also a well-shaped edging. The under side may, of course, be flat ; two or three bines forming a sort of ribbon. The pieces have then to form a tiny hedge entirely on the upper

side, and they can be put on in a little degree sideways, coming up from the left hand as the artist works towards herself. The workers at these wreaths should wear gloves, as the evergreens are apt to wound and stain the fingers.

Having made a length sufficient to extend all round, winding on with some dark wool and making here and there a drawn or slip-knot, the top has to be bent into its proper place at the end, whilst the two ends are firmly tied together. Laid on the table, the wreath should fit very flatly to it, leaving the inner side nearly bare of foliage, while feathering gracefully on the other side. Some persons alter the plan of working, by employing a covered circle of zinc perforated with holes ready-made for the needle to pass through, and then they work round and round, beginning with the outer edge, and ending with a row of almost upright tiny branches. I never managed this well myself, my thread would always twist so round the leaves; but I did not like sewing the flowers or their belongings, and one never does so well what one dislikes so much. The little woven wreaths, too, are so very pretty, that it is provoking to have to suggest any other kind; still some people cannot weave them nicely, and they, perhaps, would succeed better in sewing on to the zinc.

5. The wreath being thus disposed of, or the circle of growing Moss, the next thing to speak of is the

arrangement of the flowers. The difficulty is, in summer, which to select from amongst so many flowers—the pink and white Roses, the Stocks and Carnations, the Lilies and the Cactuses, the Geraniums and Verbenas: it really is very embarrassing to know which, amongst so many, we had better decide on using. The difficulty is not an unpleasant one, for there are many tastes which now can all be gratified, and in the several months we can generally find some flowers to replace our favourites when July no longer reigns paramount over the summer's course.

6. Lilies and Roses could not be wrong, I think; Lilies and Geraniums are, perhaps, still better, and they are easily substituted by many other flowers; and Water Lilies would be magnificent in a belt of Cactus. Lilies, then, cut separately from their stems, should be laid at the very edge, forming a circle resting upon the dark green wreath around; a few half-open Lily-buds may be added also amongst the full-blown flowers. This, however, much depends on the light touch or light hand of the arranger. If the foliage and leaves can be lightly arranged, with here and there a Lily leaf, so as to look well at once, the device can be carried up row by row most beautifully; bright scarlet Cactuses filling up between the wreath and central bouquet of great white Lilies.

If, however, the arranger is not pretty certain of getting the right flower into the right place at once in

a graceful way, she had better make a green foundation with a scarlet ground upon it, afterwards letting in the Lilies into their proper places.

Whichever plan be adopted, the next proceeding is the introduction of the central Lily group; four or five Lilies gathered together, resting on three or four large, cool-looking leaves: leaves of water plants, such as *Caltha palustris*, answer well for this, as they convey the same idea of freshness and coolness. Few things look more beautiful than such a group as this.

In some cases even a common soup-plate bordered all round the edge with large, thick, green leaves, might need no wreath of any smaller green. A large glass milk-pan filled in this way, in a moss-lined jardinière, is something gorgeously beautiful.

7. These dishes are very lasting, and it is an excellent plan to fill them with water in which "Condyl's Patent Disinfectant Fluid" has been mingled. It has a really perceptible effect in preserving the flowers, as well as in keeping the water from becoming bad, while it has not itself the slightest scent of any kind; its colour, however, prevents its use for transparent vases.

8. Another group for a drawing-room dish of flowers is one which might well appear also in the centre of a dinner-table.

The flowers of the pale blue Passion-flower, and

of the very palest pink Rose that happens to be procurable, are those I would recommend at present.

The Roses are all the better if they are not very double. They should be nearly full-blown ; and will, therefore, require changing two or three times, probably, before the beautiful, cool-looking, and sweetly scented blue flowers, will begin to manifest any signs of withering.

The flowers being all very pale, any deep green with them does not answer well ; and they should always have, if possible, only their own foliage. If any other is necessarily used, it should be a soft pale colour, just about the same depth as that of the flowers themselves—about what, in works shaded in sixes, would be called the third shade. These are, however, the only flowers I recollect just now which also look really beautiful when arranged together without any leaves at all, more than the few which naturally accompany each separate spray of flowers. I believe, in reality, the pale soft tints do not require any great contrast to set them off, it being rather their own harmony on which they depend for beauty.

The loveliest way I ever saw them done was in a large raised crystal dish, filled with water, and standing on a table ; between the flowers was the clear cool water, looking so fresh, with the flowers seeming almost to float upon it. The Passion-flowers alone

are very lovely ; but if mixed with the Roses, a double row of the latter all round the dish—fringed with a wreath of their own leaves, and a group gathered loosely in the centre of the pale blue flowers, quite unmixed with any other colour—has a particularly delicate effect: the scent, too, is delightful. When they are to be really mingled in a group together, green should be more made use of. Acacia leaves then do well for the purpose, having the desirable pale and yellowish-green tint. In this case I should say that a ray-formed design would be best ; laying first the thick fringe of pale Acacia leaves all round the edge, then placing the Roses, and lastly putting in the Passion-flowers to fill up the wedge-shaped spaces left.

This would be very beautiful ; but not nearly equal, I think, to the loosely arranged group with its wide Rose-border. Some designers would even place a common finger-glass in the middle of the dish ; and after arranging the latter with its Rose-wreath and a single band round the foot of the glass of Passion-flowers, they would group together in the central tumbler a knot of the drooping flowers ; thus raising them a little to show their exquisite shape and colour while drooping over, the glass remaining hidden.

9. A most useful and simple every-day arrangement has a row of large well-washed Geranium leaves placed on the edge of a soup-plate full of water, a

thick circle of leaves being carried on in concentric rings over the whole surface.

The scarlet Geraniums here contrast very well with small white Roses, or with blossoms of the white ivy-leaved Geranium.

10. Even in London, in the summer time, for these dishes, scarlet and white Geraniums, Moss Roses and Mignonette, white Pinks, Lilies, and red Carnations, or common China Roses, and Lilies of the Valley, may be bought most easily; if, indeed, we have not the added pleasure of growing them in our rooms, or on our roofs or balconies.

11. There is, indeed, one actual dish formed of *growing* flowers, which is so very pretty and so extremely sweet, that I cannot forbear describing it; and its management is even easier, if possible, than that of the cut flowers, which require to be renewed more frequently. Dishes like the following will succeed each other from December to May, each remaining for many weeks in beauty. Even for cut flowers it would be well worth planting such groups. What I have had arranged on plates and glass dishes produced also a most lovely effect when out, the plates being dropped into a china bowl, or surrounded by one of the little wreaths already described minutely.

12. One charming group is formed of three white bouquet Hyacinths, and then six, of palest rose colour,

placed in a circle with them. Nine little Blue-bells (*Scilla Sibirica*) are dotted down amongst them ; and eighteen Snowdrops droop their graceful heads, and wave their slender foliage round the more brilliant wreath—into which, moreover, they are sometimes dotted.

13. Another very pretty group has blue Hyacinths instead of rose colour ; and Snowdrops, altogether, in the place of Scillas.

14. A third plan places one white or rose flower in the middle ; three rose or white in a sort of triangle round it ; and round this again three of the centre colour, each between the last. Every vacant corner is simply crowded again with the Snowdrops and Scillas, placing the Scillas, if possible, in between the centre and the triangle, the Snowdrops filling up every smaller space.

15. Another delightful and most sweet-scented group is of dwarf red Van Thols and white Crocuses. These are most easily managed, and last a very long time ; while, being grown in-doors, and shielded from smoke and rain, their exquisitely fresh appearance is something very charming.

The chief thing to attend to is to get shades of colour suited to go together, and also bulbs that will flower together ; any one, therefore, wishing to make up such dishes, had better explain their wishes to the seedsmen they employ.

These dishes, being duly covered with the green moss, which keeps all fresh and moist, require only water and full light to grow and flower perfectly.

CHAPTER XII.

FURNISHING VASES WHEN THE FLOWERS ARE FEW.

1. PERSONS who possess small gardens, and who, having probably nursed every plant affectionately, cannot bear to think of depriving it of its beauty, even to remove that gayness to the drawing-room vases, may be glad to hear how to gather flowers with the smallest waste, and how to arrange them so as to make the greatest show.

The rules for this are very simple, though a design for it is impossible, as so much depends on the arranger's taste and lightness of touch in placing the flowers ; so that even if I could accurately describe the effect of a well arranged vase, it would become stiff from the mere restraint of copying.

My best advice in a case like this would be to take, in the first place, abundance of green, if the nosegay is to be of a solid style. In that case it

does not much matter what the green may be—Myrtle, Geranium, Privet, Box, or Laurustinus. Asparagus, too, in summer, is excessively pretty, and looks like a plant of Heath; and from the woods and hedgerows, if one is in the country, innumerable green things can easily be brought in, of which amongst the prettiest are green moss tresses.

Having an abundant foundation of green—the green itself being arranged as carefully for the effects of light and shade as though it were the bouquet; making it, however, not in broken lights, but well massed together—the next thing to be done is to see what flowers the garden can afford us.

2. As a general rule, all flowers of thin texture—and most especially those which combine with it a rather pale and delicate colour, or which close up quickly—are, if gathered, not only losses to the garden-bed, but of no avail whatever for the drawing-room vase. They are tempting to gather, because they look at first so pretty in one's hand, seen alone and closely, and because one fancies they will not be very badly missed considering they are small. But very much mistaken are both of these ideas. They are missed a good deal if gathered in any quantity, since generally they grow low, and are filling up some corner; and certainly they do not improve the bouquet, for, being thin, and wanting in vividness of colour, if they do not shut up at once, or tumble off

the stalk, they often are more apt to do harm than good.

The larger flowers, of course, should be gathered with grave consideration, and by some one who has the vase in view, and knows generally how she wants to fill it! Let us suppose, for instance, a garden to contain, as many gardens do, scarlet, pink, and white bedding-out Geraniums, Verbenas, Carnations, China Asters, Roses, and Calceolarias. Petunias we will not speak of, as they seldom answer well for gathering; and *Nemophila*, *Convolvulus*, &c., are too fragile to be worth picking. But out of the others there is an abundant choice.

3. The chief thing to avoid is gathering scarlet and pink Geraniums, or scarlet and pink Verbenas. Pink and dark rose-colour do well in both together, but the pink and scarlet in the same flowers are so much alike that they want to be more or less so, and in looking at the nosegay one unconsciously compares them.

4. A good-sized vase, well filled with green for the solid part and edges, would look very well with several white or very light flowers put in in different places dotting about the vase, then working to one side of the white, but by no means at regular distances, at least for a first attempt; as in very mixed arrangements any degree of form is difficult to do well. Perhaps, at the back or side of one of the

lighter flowers a piece of dark Verbena, a Clove Carnation, or a red Rose, might be placed ; or even two or three such flowers carelessly grouped together, generally all the better for being of the same kind. (I should mention that I only name the light flowers to give myself a starting-point from which I can describe). Say that above a cluster of crimson Roses there are two or three pieces of white and pale pink Verbena, slightly verging towards the next light flower. Underneath, on the shady side, if anywhere, would be the purple or mauve Verbena, lighted up in its turn—when the time comes for lighting, which is only at the very last—with a little piece of velvety scarlet Geranium : remembering that it is the more essential to choose a deep full scarlet because of the purple being so dead that a paler, thinner colour, would look poor by its side.

These purple Verbenas must be only looked on as shades ; a flower-glass will look no fuller for them, though sometimes they will answer for throwing in a shadow. These dark flowers should always be arranged not to overshadow, but to be enlivened by, the lighter flowers near.

5. The centre of the vase will probably have a cluster of Roses, or a fine Geranium, which shows extremely well if surrounded with four of its own good-sized leaves. If Roses are used there, one or two little pieces of Scarlet Geranium often prove effective

for lighting up the centre. A Water Lily is particularly beautiful when it can be had ; so are Passion-flowers, well relieved with scarlet or with crimson. But the very centre should be always some grand sort of flower, or a distinct light sort of group—light, not in colour, so much as in arrangement. Spikes of Mignonette do better in the middle than in any other place. A good group of Carnations here answers beautifully ; and sometimes one may make a merit of a difference, just as at another time one tries to keep all alike. Thus five or six splendid Carnations, of various shades and colours, may look very striking.

6. When the general effect of the nearly finished vase is that the edge is darker than the centre, a few little sprays of yellow *Calceolaria* may be introduced with very great advantage ; these will, better than any flower I know, light up the vase without toning down the colour as white does, or reddening it too much, as scarlet does when not wanted for its own sake. The yellow may have put in against it a good-sized spray of the dark orange brown sort of *Calceolaria*, which has often a very good effect, and decides the yellow to be really gold colour. If the centre should be the heaviest, it may probably require the addition of a little red or pink or white to give it liveliness, as well as a little yellow to give the required light — light and liveliness, in this instance, having a different meaning, as may easily be seen by substituting Scarlet

Geranium for the bright yellow flower, when the group will look rather duller than it did before.

The lights must not be too numerous, nor too large, nor too near the actual centre. I think for them it is best to slip in the flower (the stalk smooth and deprived of leaves), and then to cut off with sharp scissors any superfluous separate flowers.

7. China Asters, Stocks, and dull-coloured Verbenas, should never advance much into notice : sometimes a good China Aster may be brought more forward, but generally vases are better with lighter-formed flowers in the more conspicuous places. When there is a choice, I think if there is much scarlet in the vase, the yellow-tinged light flowers do better than those of a pinkish or blueish hue ; which, in their turn, answer best where the chief tone is crimson.

8. There is also another way which I have found effective ; that is, taking perhaps not more than three or four really fine Geraniums, and placing them, as lightly as possible, in a vase of an open shape, leaving the centre merely filled with a spray of leaves. This seems so trifling that I should hardly have thought of naming it, were it not that some time ago, in an accidental dearth of flowers, a vase arranged in this way was considered quite remarkable for its beauty ; and, in fact, I am not quite sure that, on artistic principles, our mixed nosegays are much to be commended. Certainly a plant, with its few

specimens of a single flower in its different stages, ranging from bud to blossom, is often much lovelier than a mingled bouquet.

Three Roses all of the same kind, or some in different stages of bloom—either white, pink, or crimson, with a little foliage—are extremely beautiful, and so are one or two clusters of climbing Roses, laid alone in a vase together.

The great secret in these arrangements is only to *seem* to seek to display a pretty spray of flowers and foliage, not to fill a vase.

My Geranium-vase, I remember, had the clusters of flowers lying lightly around the edge ; then the two or three small leaves attached to the stalk just very slightly occupied the centre, making altogether just a little spray.

9. Wild flowers may be very useful, though they often fail in mixing well in a garden bouquet, because they so seldom present much of a mass of colour. I have found, however, that by grouping them together in little knots before arranging them in the vase, this greater depth of colour can often be obtained. Leaves and berries alone will often thus produce a very gay effect, by force of strongly-contrasted foliage.

Wild Roses are indeed amongst our most lovely flowers, when lightly grouped together without any attempt at mixing them with any other blossoms ; they have also a most slight but delicious tea-scent.

10. In autumn, when Ferns of any sort are in plenty, there can be little lack of sufficient flowers to fill up the vases ; the Fern leaves grouped together only requiring a few little dots of colour just about the stem, to make a far more attractive group than they would do if placed in a crowded vase. Very small crimson, pink, blue, or yellow flowers—all, and each—are appropriate to the foot of the vase of Ferns. Large flowers do not answer well in this case, whatever is their colour.

11. In the depth of winter, also, it is surprising how gaily a vase may be decked, with only a few of the earlier spring flowers, by collecting the blossoms into clusters, as I said just now. Hepaticas, pink and blue ; Periwinkles, blue and white ; Snowdrops, and even Crocuses, can thus be made available ; while one good flower—Hyacinth, Camellia, or Azalea—may completely “make” a bouquet, by giving a good centre to group the others round.

12. Ivy leaves also come in most usefully in a winter vase ; and where three or four Scarlet Geraniums only can be spared, a vase filled with Ivy leaves—looking like one wide spray, with a few small leaves drooping over the side, and the flowers, such as they are, showing from amidst and almost from underneath the leaves—looks pretty enough to be used by choice rather than necessity.

I need scarcely say how pretty such vases may be

made during the seasons rather more rich in blossoms ; Ivy-leaved, Crimson Unique, or Scarlet Geranium leaves, taking, if necessary, the place of Ivy ; and the blossoms of the White Ivy Geranium, or of any of the pink, or scarlet, or crimson kinds, being used for the flowers.

13. This arrangement is open to the objection of being all one flower, for sometimes it is hard to spare many of any one kind ; but half a dozen being quite as many as are even thus required, I do not think the difficulty will be felt. Where there are several vases to fill, the flowers will, in fact, go much further in this way than in any other ; each vase taking one shade of colour, as cerise, pink, scarlet, rose, white, mauve, slate, purple, &c. The Verbenas also would come in useful here.

For the larger flowers, particularly—the beautiful Lilies, for instance, Passion-flowers, and Roses—in all cases where five or six vases have to be filled, and where, perhaps, three or four flowers of each sort are all that can be spared, I am quite sure that the same number of flowers that if mixed would be none too much for one, may, under this arrangement, be divided into at least as many vases as there are different kinds of flowers.

14. The chief thing to bear in mind in making up these vases, is to aim not at height, but at width. A large, wide bouquet, can be better made with six

flowers than a high one with twenty, and the wide form is also by far the prettiest, when tolerably well managed.

CHAPTER XIII.

HANGING BASKETS OF FLOWERS.

1. **THERE** seems to be at present a rage for hanging-baskets filled with growing plants, and these same baskets may be also a very fair addition to our indoor display of drooping Fuchsia-like cut flowers. Begonias would look well hanging from the edge; while Lilies, Geraniums, Lobelias, or Ferns, would be extremely light and pretty if placed more in the centre.

The style of flowers should accord always with that of the basket which contains them. In a heavy-looking basket (though a heavy-looking basket may weigh very little), there should always be some plant of size and solidity sufficient to justify to the eye its seeming weight; while in little, simple, sieve-like baskets, of which I am very fond, graceful waving fronds of Fern, drooping Begonia sprays, light wreaths of Ivy, arching branchlets of Fairy Roses, Cyclamens and Snowdrops, are perhaps most proper. Achieving the appearance of naturalness is a very

great art in making up these baskets. The Ivy should seem to twine of its own wild will; while Forget-me-nots, for instance, should crop up and bend over round the edge. A little creeping moss growing in the basket is a most useful plan for grounding; and the smallest bottles hidden in it, or in freshly-gathered moss, preserve the requisite moisture round the flower-stems.

2. For those flowers, even, that hang below the basket, a little care in choosing much-bent stalks will make it an easy task to keep them upright enough, for the water necessary not to be poured out. A loosely-made ball of moss, soaked for some time as a ball, in water, and then very slightly squeezed just for a moment to prevent the water dripping, is a very good plan for keeping the flowers moist; but in summer, in an open basket, this would quickly dry, and require to be again well wet all through. The "hedgehog," or porcupine shapes made for Crocuses, are not inappropriate for putting in such a basket to hold the flowers.

3. Climbing Roses for baskets are remarkably lovely. Generally, when we can have it, a natural spray is very much better than anything artificial, such as different flowers, even of the same kind grouped; for instance, what can be more graceful and more sweet than a wild Rose-branch?

These baskets are often suspended by several wires,

and a long Ivy wreath, or a creeping stem of *Lycopodium*, or a bright *Convolvulus*, is very pretty for twining about and concealing them. Some persons, again, form a little nest at the knot where the wires all meet, placing in that nest some plant which grows with very little soil, and leaving it naturally to find its own way down.

4. I will now describe a basket which looks very well when filled; but I know not what flowers to choose for it, it is such an all-season composition.

It is low and wide, and has a tall light handle, and over the edges Ivy leaves are drooping.

The stems of Ivy are twisted round the handle, and the green leaves all round are so thickly placed as almost to hide the basket itself entirely.

Being a group for all months, we may take the first, and describe the basket as it may be in January.

A cross-bar of green should run all through it both ways, dividing it into four distinct compartments, the green surrounding all forming a graceful frame.

5. If none of the divisions are filled with white there may be a double line of it, or a line on one side, the green all round, making thus an edging. White Azaleas are very beautiful for filling a division; but for the edge Snowdrops are most suitable. A corner full of wild Primroses arranged in leaves would be very pretty, with Violets next to them;

or pink Hepaticas ; and at cross corners with the Violets some of the pretty Scillas, or a group of pencilled Crocus.

6. Pink Hyacinths and sulphur-coloured Primroses, blue Crocuses, and low dwarf Tulips, make a pretty basket too. White Azaleas and Scarlet Geraniums, Violets and blue Hyacinths, are also beautiful.

Also white Roses, crimson Roses, pink Roses, and the delicate buff tea-scented kind, with Lilies.

But, whatever the flowers may be, and no matter how lovely they are, the more their green frame shades them the more they will be admired.

7. Another very good group, at least for an autumnal basket, has several fronds of Maiden-hair Fern, or of *Adiantum cuneatum*, arranged as a plant or crown in the very middle, looking well in this place, with a close surfacing of *Lycopodium apoda*, or long tresses of one of the creeping mosses, laid lightly on ; no attempt, however, being made to pack the basket with any kind of leaves.

8. Two or three wild Harebells rising amidst the Fern, blue Lobelias, pale pink *Convolvulus*, a long bine of Honeysuckle, or of the great white Bindweed ; a wreath of the pale Passion-flower, or of sweet white Jessamine, or of purple Clematis ;—not one of these would come amiss ; any one of them rather would be most lovely. Two or three sprays should fall underneath of similar kinds of flowers, as though the

wreath that waved above, or swept around the edge, had put out also a little tuft below. The Harebells, however, and all bell-shaped flowers like these, must always grow upright, to let their bells hang down.

Begonia fuchsioides is as good a plant as any that I know for creeping out through the sides of the baskets. *Sedum Sieboldii* would do well also—tolerably at least; for, if anything, it is rather large, and hardly enough of a distinct bright colour. The more one colour is kept to, in these baskets, the better, generally, is the effect produced; and if only Ferns are planted, the beautiful *Pteris tricolor* and a good *Lycopodium* are alone enough to make a pretty group.

9. These baskets really can hardly but be pretty; the chief fear, as usual, is that of too much crowding them. Neither great variety nor great quantity should ever be permitted; for where one or two delicate, light-leaved plants, and a little bright-coloured flower may look very elegant, a close arrangement, on the contrary, has a clumsy look, and entirely destroys the idea of a basket with its own little stock of flowers growing within its bounds.

CHAPTER XIV.

UPRIGHT FLOWER VASES.

1. THERE is another mode of arranging flowers of which we have not at present spoken, yet it is a very useful and effective plan.

Any common flowers do very well in this way. Very choice things, indeed, are rather wasted for such a purpose; while a close mass of common flowers will, at a little distance, answer extremely well.

2. For these great, flat, one-faced nosegays, the usual way is to select, first, some large and flat green spray. Box does well, and so does Fir. It must be very stiff, and if the ends are pretty it is so much the better; several pieces of green can be bound together to make up the required shape; or if the side branches are very straggling, they should be woven in and out till they form a tolerably close mass.

Having arranged the background with a stem as long as it is intended to make the flower-stalks, a large solid flower, or bunch of flowers, should be selected to form the centre. If on a soft stalk, it will require mounting; and then, being thrust straight through the middle of the flat green branch, it must

be bent down at the back, and bound down to the stem.

3. Before I go any further, it will be well to mention that these flowers must be mounted on green stems—such as will bend a little; not, as for other forms, on short square bits of deal. Green Hazel or Willow stems do well; but any green flexible sticks answer equally, and the flowers should be bound firmly on with a little of the common galvanised zinc wire.

4. A white Dahlia, or Chrysanthemum, is a good centre for a bouquet of this kind, or a white one edged with pink; and the flowers can either shade off from it, or there can be an exceedingly dark centre, with the flowers gradually growing lighter as they approach the edge. These common flowers answer even better than more delicate kinds, when, for instance, they have to fill the front of some high niche. For a console table, however, or for anything not mounted up very high, Geraniums are very beautiful, and so are all the large transparent flowers—Azaleas, for instance, Lilies, and Passion-flowers. Passion-flowers and Geraniums, with Roses in the centre, would be very beautiful.

5. Fuchsias can very well indeed be used for vases that are filled in this way, both for drooping over the vase and for the edges generally all round. The very clear white kind, with a brilliant pink or scarlet tube, is then the best sort to use; and crimson sprays look

very well, mixed and arranged with these. Very clear bright crimson it should be, however ; and the corolla should be of blue, not of a reddish purple.

These Fuchsia sprays should be wired on stems, no matter how short they themselves may be ; and little wet pieces of cotton or gutta percha should surround these stems and be carefully wired on.

6. Every flower-spray contained in these nosegays must be separately passed through, the stem going through from the front to the back, and being there bent down and bound.

Many people, after it is arranged, if the flowers with short stalks are numerous, lay the whole contrivance down on its back in shallow water, so that it gets well saturated without any water touching the petals in the front. When taken out of the water, the flowers are merely laid down for a short time on a coarse piece of cloth to drain.

Repeating this process every night is an excellent means of keeping the flowers fresh and vigorous. Another most excellent plan for keeping cut flowers fresh, is placing them at night outside a window looking to the west, so that they will not have the early morning sun. The cool night air and the dew, in summer, always seem wonderfully to revive them. This, however, is only *en passant*.

7. The choice of flowers to use must be regulated by the style of the place that requires filling. For a

large vase a good way from the eye, very large bright flowers may be freely used. Dahlias for the centre, and three or four more round ; with very large Roses, Chrysanthemums, or Carnations, to form a great part of the mass. Scarlet Geraniums and white flowers, in this case, are extremely useful in touches of bright colour put in about the outer edge, and in small masses elsewhere for light ; but little delicate flowers are more than thrown away. The vivid colours cannot be too massive or too bright.

Some Verbenas do well ; the kinds with a white eye, amongst the reds particularly, are far the brightest-looking.

The centre requires to be closely packed with flowers ; though, from each flower showing its full surface, the quantity consumed is much less than might reasonably have been expected.

Carnations come in remarkably well here, as do also the great white Lilies. White Geraniums and Roses, though open to objection because of the petals falling, can still be easily cut short off when faded, freshly-mounted flowers being inserted in their places.

I always avoid placing at the top of a large and high group like this, flowers that every one knows are very low in growth ; and climbing Roses, Clematis, Honeysuckle, and Jessamine, generally give one flowers enough for edging.

Tall sprays of blue Lupine do not look badly ;

Columbines, Snapdragons and Fox-gloves, are very pretty ; and pale blue Irises are delicately lovely.

8. When the bouquet is not to have a solid flower centre, I think it is best to collect two or three flowers of the most decided colour, to form there something that may be a starting-point. Under all circumstances, however, it is from the centre that we should work : not the exact centre, but the centre of the front, just above the hand if held, only allowing room for a drooping lower spray.

Many persons back the whole, when finished, with a fresh spray of foliage, something that has points of a pretty green ; and this is so far good that it can be changed almost daily if it should become faded.

CHAPTER XV.

WREATHS FOR DECORATIONS.

1. THERE are sometimes great difficulties in making the wreaths which are now so often used for Christmas decorations. They are often made in ways that take up a great length of time ; whilst in all these arrangements most frequently the simplest sort, and the quickest done, are also the most graceful.

Some take strips of calico and sew the foliage on them ; others prepare long stiff cords, and bind it

down upon them; and a third party, who, I think, do best, take a succession of small green branches, and bind them continuously together, without any other support than that afforded by the overlapping stems.

2. In proceeding thus, the first piece of green used for commencing the wreath should have a longish stalk, and all the pieces should have a few inches left of bare stem for binding over.

All the pieces should be trimmed into a proper size for the thickness of the wreath. For twining round pillars, the wreaths can hardly be made too large; and when there is not material sufficient to make them really handsome (and they do take an enormous quantity), I think it looks much better to have one immense drooping wreath of Ivy and spreading Fir placed round the top or capital of each pillar, the entwining of the shaft meanwhile being left quite unattempted.

3. A very pretty way of decorating any large massive piece of stonework—a font, for instance, if in a church, or a statue, or a doorway, or for deeply-cut niches, as for a deep window-frame—is to take a few flat fan-shaped branches, and without any attempt at fastening, lay them down in the manner of a wreath round the base of the pedestal, or in the angle of the recess, or along the front of the sculptured niche. In arranging the decorations

of a hall or gallery filled with statuary, this would be found a most rapid and effective plan.

4. For all these purposes variegated foliage is not generally much to be recommended; and when it is used it should never be mixed with any of a darker kind. The only way in which I think it looks really well is in a massive wreath hung in the strongest light; and in a place where it will either produce a harmonious effect of colour, or where it will be near enough to the eye to be distinctly recognized as what it really is. It should never be used on a background of green, whether light or dark—unless, indeed, the foliage is very nearly white. Even then, however, dark green is very cold and heavy for it to rest against; crimson does far better.

From some effects of colour I have observed lately out of doors, I fancy that a dark bluish-purple would be a rather good contrast; but this does not sound very natural, and I cannot answer for its success in practice.

For the large green wreaths a great quantity of Fir branches might be used with advantage. Box does well also, only it is not often to be had in quantity, and should be therefore kept for the smaller wreaths, where these are required also; Portugal Laurel does pretty well, Ivy the best of all, and common Laurel tolerably. Holly looks very

bright and glossy, but it must have no berries ; and Laurustinus would be very useful sometimes, if it were not for its too numerous flowers, which in a wreath of large size are not at all admissible.

5. For picture-frames and looking-glasses nothing looks more beautiful than a wreath of Arbutus adorned with its scarlet berries ; Laurustinus and Snowberries being thickly intermixed, and the whole crowned by a bouquet of the various mingled foliage. Fern leaves are most useful for such central bouquets ; and on a larger scale in some cases, as in harvest time, a triumphal arch crowned with handfuls of ears of corn, arranged one up and one down, and tied together loosely in the middle, is very appropriate and pretty. I always wonder very much that in the apple counties the beautiful bright red fruit is not more made use of for open-air decorations ; I never once remember seeing it ; and yet how very beautiful the glowing crimson fruit looks clustering amongst the leaves.

In the apple counties I know it used to be "not the thing" to have apples brought to table ; but this rule, I think, is being properly broken through, now that prize fruit is thought so much of ; so perhaps in this case also it will become more sought for, and there may be a chance of seeing some of the bright colouring which those peculiarly bright-faced little crab-like Apples would lend to an arch in autumn.

For very small wreaths for following the lines in delicately carved woodwork, or for the tracery of an open device in wire, the little pieces of Box are the very best of any, where, as is usually the case in England, a sufficiency of Myrtle is not to be obtained. These little sprays are far better when of a naturally compact and branchy shape. They cannot, indeed, be too neat, and can scarcely be too short; as the shorter each piece is, the closer and neater generally is the wreath itself.

In all these arrangements we are supposing no flowers to be used, the green alone forming the ornament.

6. When, however, flowers are added, I have found it answer best to put them in after the wreaths are fastened in their places. Often it is easy to slip in the stalks; otherwise, when mounted on wood or wire that will pierce the mass of foliage, or even by means of a little wire, the flowers may easily be attached outside. The flowers should be carefully made to follow in the fall of their foliage the direction of the leaves, although it seems useless to strive against the great objections to making them up together—namely, the time the wreaths take making, and the rough treatment which they have to suffer. The flowers being only afterwards attached, can very easily be removed and replaced if they fade too quickly. I dare not say how long I have

known the green itself continue to look well, fully extending over all the season of the Christmas gaieties.

7. Perhaps it may be useful here to describe exactly a device of this kind ; and I think that a monogram, or device, or cipher, surrounded with a wreath, will be the best design to give, as it includes both green and coloured work.

Say, then, that the device is to be a cipher or a motto on a shield, surrounded by a wreath.

8. The letters should first be traced upon the stiff piece of canvas stretched upon a hoop. Card would do, but calico or canvas is far better. The very simplest-shaped old English letters are the best to use ; and after they are drawn in outline upon the canvas a strong solution of gum should be laid all over it, omitting with great exactness the spaces of these said letters. The whole ground should then be closely covered with Snowberries or some other white berry, or with white everlastings ; or, in fact, with anything in the vegetable world that can be made to look really white and pretty, while retaining a flat surface. If flowers are used, the gum will perhaps be exchanged for the use of a needle and thread.

Or, if the letters can be provided for in flowers, the ground may be all of Holly berries, which, though I name it last, is most to be advised ; but Christmas time is a difficult one to provide for, and

this device might serve for use then as well as in the summer time, when scarlet and white Verbenas are waiting to fill the canvas.

9. The ground being prepared, the letters have to be filled up very closely and fully ; and it is sometimes even well, with a pair of scissors, to clip off any leaf or petal which creeps beyond its bounds. Scarlet looks well for the letters, but nothing does better than golden words on white.

10. For making the frame, a prettily shaped piece of green should be laid either way in the hand, and bound together in the centre with some feathery pieces, to conceal the join. The wreath should then go on each way ; and I may here mention that acorns and Oak leaves in autumn, and Laurel leaves at other seasons, make a beautiful frame-wreath, even quite alone, especially when the scene and the devices are of a warlike kind. Otherwise a beautiful spray of Arbutus and Snowberry, with Laurustinus at the top, and a sort of knot of the same underneath the frame, would best combine the two separate lengths ; each drooping downwards if of a creeping kind of foliage, or pointing upwards if of the Laurel class, and being made tolerably even as to their size all round.

CHAPTER XVI.

FLORAL PAVEMENTS.

1. THERE is a very beautiful fashion of floral decoration, used chiefly, I think, in Italy; originating, probably, in the gorgeous-coloured mosaics and the prevalent glowing colours of that sunny land.

They form, on great occasions there, a sort of floral pavement, marking out distinctly the pattern on the ground, and then filling it in with a perfect mass of many-coloured petals. Rose leaves, white and red, Camellias, Violets, Lilacs, Syringas, red Poppies, blue Corn-flowers, and Carnations, all contribute their gay and scented petals.

2. Now, there is often in England room to adopt this very pretty mode. Sometimes I have seen little conservatories shut off from a landing, and not intended to be walked in: how very beautiful these pavements, raised up a little, would look in them.

In Italy their chief use is for grand church pageants, to adorn the pavement of the church, all shining, as it already is in many instances, with its marble flooring. At village feasts, and for gay weddings in little country places, I think this would be, in England also, a new element of easily acquired beauty.

8. What a carpet would the Rose, the Thistle, and the Shamrock make, sketched out upon the pavement, and filled in with their own bright colours on a ground of white. For the Thistle, perhaps, it would be difficult to find Thistle flowers; but the common Clover blossom or Verbena petals might match it with exactness.

4. A mere tile pattern, done on a large scale, in brilliant colours, is also really beautiful; and a tessellated pavement may be made a perfect glow of colour, all in the fairest harmony.

5. Coats of arms and mottoes, with coronets or crests, are amongst the most effective of all the varied subjects. Jewelled patterns also look very bright: ribbons, for instance, embroidered with pearls or rubies. Pearls represented by Snowberries, small white Roses, or Lilies of the Valley, double Hawthorn, or white Verbena, would look very well, if the ground is blue; and so on a white ground would rubies, made of Scarlet Geraniums or red berries, the berries answering best of all for this innocent sort of "paste."

The Lily is again a most lovely pattern. The anchor of hope is an English device enough; and there are even tawny flowers to form the British lion; while the Union Jack, I think, would seldom come amiss; and the Red-cross banner of St. George would be always welcomed. It really seems surprising that

such a decoration should have remained so long untried.

6. The flowers here, again, have to be of the most distinct colours to fill up each its appointed place in the general work ; but still it is very possible, if one flower is not quite of the required shade, to give it a little extra brightness, or to slightly darken it, by mixing with its petals those of a flower possessing more of the required attribute.

Many flowers answer beautifully when used in this way. White and purple Violets, Snowdrops, Crocuses, white Alyssum and Blue-bells, Lilac (white and purple), Laburnum, Gueldre Roses, *Pyrus japonica* ; blossoms of many fruit-trees in their wild or double state ; pink, and white, and crimson Roses ; Geraniums and Verbenas ; the autumn saffron Crocus, also ; with Dahlias and Carnations. There are few country places that cannot furnish at most seasons some sort of bright-toned flower-carpets.

7. In winter even, when there is nothing else, there are always berries to be laid in close-grained masses along the edges of the green moss-carpet. Variegated leaves, too, and light and dark green foliage, afford, even in the time when flowers are fewest, some not unimportant substitutes. *Arbutus* berries and Snowberries are not indeed to be walked on, for they crush so easily ; but many kinds of winter Kale are exceedingly pretty in their fringy foliage.

There is a little scarlet-lined cup-shaped fungus (*Peziza*), growing chiefly on the broken wood of damp and shady hedges, or near to some dingly brook-side, which looks very pretty half hidden amongst the moss. It is to be found from November to March or April; and, where it can be met with, is such a pretty substitute for flowers, which it quite matches in its brilliant colour. It should be gathered stick and all; and the stick has to be covered with moss, and to be kept in a state of moisture.

8. In summer, before putting down the flowers, it is well to sprinkle the stones well over; and if it is hot weather, they should be seen to be thoroughly cooled during some hours before.

If there is to be any sand for the foundation, it ought to be rendered wet; and moss, when it is used, should be likewise sprinkled.

Where the pavement is to be in a sunny spot, it is often well to make it on a frame of black or dark-coloured canvas, or on a piece of oilcloth, to be afterwards carried to the spot on a board or handbarrow, and gently slipped into its proper place.

In the hot summer weather, when so many flowers will not retain their petals, there are many advantages in adopting a plan like this. If it is inconvenient to carry the flower-carpet even a short distance to its destined place, or if the spot where it is to lie is constantly being walked over, and cannot be given up

to the workers' hands, it is possible to arrange the design close by, on a flat-spread piece of carpet or of oilcloth, and afterwards to draw it gently into its proper place.

The flowers, especially if they are not arranged on an under bed of moss, are generally better for being very thickly strewed—at least half an inch in thickness.

9. Some people think it well to arrange the pattern, or form the words or initials, in different coloured stuffs, sewed carefully together into the proper shapes for the colours to cover; when this is done, of course, the general effect is less soon disturbed. The usual way, however, is to sketch the pattern in chalk, or tack it in white thread.

10. For initials, mottoes, &c., whether alone or encircling a device, gold-coloured flowers, such as Laburnums, Buttercups, or double-flowered Gorse, look exceedingly well on white. But for a floral pavement so many flowers are well adapted, that in most cases anything which abounds in the particular place or season can easily be employed. And no one who has used the brilliant mosaic formed by them to fill some recess or slab, will be likely to despise them as an easy and effective means of beautiful decoration.

CHAPTER XVII.

FLOWERS OF EACH SEASON.

I NOW proceed to give, after the way of cookery-books, some floral bills of fare—just as guides to those who may require to know the flowers of each colour that are each month in season.

As far as possible, all flowers named under the same head will be found to agree together as to colour, though the shades may vary. Sometimes, however, it is impossible to be certain, as accidental causes, either of soil or climate, will lead to variation. This, however, is of the less importance in that it chiefly refers to *shade*; the variations of light especially, often causing flowers forced in winter to be paler than their summer sisters; while, again, London flowers, and those that are grown in-doors, have generally more delicate tints than those which have been growing in an open and sunny spot.

JANUARY, FEBRUARY. AND
MARCH.

The white flowers of these months are particularly abundant.

There are the old double white Camellias, which

are amongst the easiest of green-house plants to grow, flowering to perfection even in my Plant-Cases, where I have them now more than a fortnight old, looking fresh and spotless as when they first came out; then there are the lovely fringed kind, (*Fimbriata Alba*) and *Mont Blanc*, *Narcissus*, and *Alba insignis*.

Amongst Azaleas there are *Indica Alba*, *White Perfection*, *Iveryana*, *the Bride*, and *Louise Margottin*. Snow-drops there are, and white Hyacinths; the bouquet or miniature Hyacinths, *La Candeur* and *Grand Vainqueur*, being exquisite for cut flowers; while *Grand Vidette*, *Victoria Regina*, *Madame Van der Hoop*, and a larger edition of *Grand Vainqueur*, are of a snowy white, exquisitely fair and fragrant.

The white Van Thol Tulip is tolerably white, and Narcissi are very sweet; though they show too much yellow (in the *Polyanthus* varieties) to do well as white flowers.

The large double white *Narcissus* is perfectly beautiful, and lasts a very long time. *The Bride* is a very delightful kind of white clove *Carnations*, and, like the white *Auricula*, flowers well in winter; also white Violets, and Lilies of the Valley: I force the latter in my plant-cases* in about six weeks. White Lilac, *Syringa* (properly called *Philadelphus*;

* The heated plant-cases referred to here are those made solely by Pickard and Co., King's Cross.

which must be remembered in asking for it at nurseries), white Alyssum (grown in pots just kept from hard frost and wet), Deutzia gracilis, white Crocuses, white Heaths, are also amongst the most useful white flowers.

We will now proceed to the red or crimson of the cerise tinge, as opposed to the scarlet tint, and in these as well we shall find a brilliant list.

Amongst the crimson Camellias, one particularly suitable for the centre of a large vase is *Mathotiana* (an enormous flower almost like a Pœony); *Chandleri*, *Colvilli*, and *Beali*, may be also mentioned.

Corallina, and *Imbricata*, are of a rosy crimson, very much resembling the Géant des Batailles Rose; which, being so well known, forms a useful type of colour.

The *Rex Rubrorum* and *Imperator Rubrorum* Tulips, I have very often spoken of earlier in this book as most useful flowers. The *Dracæna* (*Terminalis*) is a splendid plant to use in decorations, with its long, brilliant crimson, leaves; and the floral leaves of the red Poinsettia make it also amongst the gayest of the winter flowers.

There are also a few beautiful red *Ericas* and *Epacrises*. Some *Begonias*, also, (as *B. Fuchsioides*, *B. Saundersoni*,) are very useful now, though they approach rather to the next section of scarlet or coral red. This includes scarlet *Geraniums*, which are

most useful flowers for vases when chosen of a good texture, and such as have not begun to get heavy and spiky with too many blooms. For cut flowers these plants should be *ill used*—kept poor, and in small pots.

The scarlet shades are not very good in general among winter plants; the texture is seldom thick enough in Azaleas to give it the velvety look it absolutely needs. I prefer myself the scarlet or red Van Thol Tulips, and the single Anemones, to almost any of the usual run of red (*i.e.* scarlet) flowers. Epacris (*Miniata*), a scarlet kind of Tree-Carnation, and sometimes red Salvias, may be also used.

We may now, however, proceed at once to pink and rose colour, which, as a shade of crimson, may be used most charmingly with the class I mentioned as Géant des Batailles Rose colour. The only essential thing is to be sure that the colours to be used together do really accord as shades, and that they are not varieties of colour; that is, one, perhaps, a pale crimson, and another a dark scarlet. Amongst Camellias, then, there are *Prince Albert*, *Tricolor imbricata*, *Juliana* (sometimes almost pure white), and *Jubilee*; all these, generally, having rosy and carmine stripes on a bright pink flower.

Chandleri elegans, *Sacci nuova*, and *Storyi*, are of a more waxen rose; *Lady Hume's Blush* is more of a shade of peach blossom.

Exquisita, *Rosy Circle*, and *Model* are lovely rose Azaleas ; also *Erica hyemalis* is one of the prettiest heaths. *Norma*, *Cosmos*, *Duke of Wellington*, *La Dame du Lac*, *Madame Hodson*, *Florence Nightingale*, and *Princess Charlotte*, are all brilliant rose Hyacinths, which can be grown most easily.

The pink bouquet Hyacinths, and the rose and white Van Thol Tulips, must not be forgotten ; nor yet the many other kinds of single and double Tulips, suited for early forcing ; at least for growing in flower-pots in-doors, and which really produce such an exquisite effect in vases.

Rose-pink Anemones, and the lovely pink Carnations, have been already mentioned ; and the common China Rose never looks lovelier or more delicate than when it blossoms in a London window. There are also many beautiful pink Geraniums ; and it matters, after all, but little what these flowers may be, whether "good" or "common," so that the shape is compact, the texture thick, and the colour, whatever it may be, brilliant and clear.

Of blue and lilac flowers there are again many from which to choose. Blue Hyacinths, Scillas, Crocuses, Hepaticas, Vincas (or Periwinkles), Violets, Grey Heliotropes, *Salvia (Patens)*, Campanulas and Blue Bells. The purple Lilac is not quite so often forced as white is, but the lilac Primrose is a very lovely flower, and has now been brought to a very

great perfection. There are also most beautiful pinkish lilac Heaths. These last named flowers are extremely precious, as they continue blossoming in water till every bud has unfolded.

Few people, however, I very much suspect, know what may be done with common English wild flowers. The common Cowslip, for instance, I have seen looking surpassingly lovely when lightly caught together with Sweetbriar and crimped leaves. A series of lovely flower baskets, children's figures chiefly, filled entirely with Primroses and Blue Bells, may be ranged round tables; and though it is very difficult at first to arrange wild flowers, people who are fond of them can always catch the trick of their exquisite simple grace.

APRIL, MAY, AND JUNE.

All the flowers named in the earlier months will now be in their beauty, without any forcing. Some few of the earliest may indeed have passed, but their places will be supplied by perhaps the most beautiful tribes of flowers for all sorts of gathered uses—the hardy or Ghent Azaleas and Rhododendrons.

For the few weeks these last, nothing can be found more perfectly fresh and lovely; and we have them

too in such varied shades of yellow, rose, and white. The lilac kinds are perhaps the least showy; the white and yellow are by far the sweetest; but all are beautiful, and adapted for every kind of use.

Amongst green-house flowers in the earlier months, the less hardy Rhododendrons make exquisite displays. *R. Princess Royal*, of a clear rose colour; *R. Veitchianum*, pure white, large and sweet scented; *R. Jasmiflorum*, *R. Javanicum*, are all amongst the newest and best varieties; and *R. Ciliatum* is beautifully adapted both for earlier forcing and for green-house or protected out-door culture. *Azalea amœna* is a beautiful semi-double pink or lilac flower, growing in-and-in, like a hose-in-hose Primrose. *A. Crispiflora*, lilac rose, and *Duc de Brabant* rose, are exquisitely beautiful. *The Bride* and *Narcissiflora* are fragrant pure white kinds. *Admiration* and *Etoile de Gand* are the loveliest blush-white. *A. Sinensis* is the best deep yellow, and *Rosy Circle*, *Model*, *Eulalie*, and *Delecta*, are all of a beautiful rose colour. Out of doors, too, the various shrubs are all in blossom now; Double Peach and Almond, Hawthorn and Cherry, Lilac and Syringa, Laburnum and Wistaria—all these are most useful and most beautiful in colour, for all spring flowers seem to have a sort of cool fresh brightness which is often lost in the flowers of hotter months.

Roses and Geraniums, Carnations and Verbenas,

also are beginning. It will, I think, be found a first-rate plan, in ordering flowers to be gathered for vases or such purpose, to send down always a flower of the required colour, or to mention some well-known one, merely as a colour pattern. *Coupe d' Hèbe*, for example, as a bright pink Rose, or common China rose colour; *Géant des Batailles* as a type of brilliant crimson; and the same in Geraniums, where the variety of names is endless: although, after all, the colours are soon apportioned.

Geraniums, however, are charming flowers for all kinds of grouping; and their colours are blended and mingled so charmingly together, that I really know scarcely any that do not suit each other. The very scarlet shades of cerise should not, however, be much mixed with pink, as they are apt to give it either a faded or a dingy look.

The most exquisite groups are made of pale pearly white flowers with blotches of rose or purple, and of the brilliant though palish pink, spotted and marked with the darkest crimson, and shading into a white or a pale fringed edge. The Geraniums require very great care in choosing good stout textured flowers; the others, even if they do not drop, look so very soon bruised and injured, when the brightness and bloom go off. They well repay some extra care, in what is after all a most pleasant branch of shop-

ping, as when selected wisely they will continue blooming for many days in water.

Side vases for dinner tables never, I think, look lovelier than when they are filled with a few fine Geraniums, amidst a host of leaves; and no flower is at once so aromatic and so unoppressive in its delightful fragrance.

Nothing is more impossible than to select Geraniums; out of the hundreds and hundreds that there are, the only thing to do is to name a few good types, giving at the same time the warning, that in pink a very faint approach to an orange tinge, and in crimson the least appearance of violet spots, or streaks, or shades, should always be avoided; the former looking dull, especially by candle light, when good flowers are brightest, and the latter always having a dulling element in any combination.

There is scarcely such a thing as a pure white Geranium; *Ariel*, perhaps, approaches it one of the most nearly, and *Delicata*, also *Vestal*, *Gem of the West*, and *Fairest of the Fair*. *Empress Eugénie*, *Bridesmaid*, and *The Bride*, are also white with a blotch of red, and extremely pretty. Some of the spotted varieties also have white grounds, and one called *Maggie* is an odd-looking flower, with five spots of black. The most brilliant flowers of any, perhaps, are those which have a ground of rosy pink

streaked and shaded with crimson into a blackish blotch.

I shall not attempt here to name the newest kinds of Geraniums, as for cutting they would be hardly in general use for another year. Only *Diophantus* (Turner), a spotted scarlet; *Alba Regina* (Beck), white with a bright red spot, and *Kettledrum* (Foster), rose-coloured with white centre, are, I believe, likely to be universal favourites.* *Celeste* (Hoyle) is said to be also a most striking flower, of an orange scarlet, resembling in colour some of the most brilliant Azaleas; but I have not seen it, and therefore cannot say what it may be by candle-light. The others named are beautiful, especially *Diophantus*, which is intensely brilliant. I have not seen the latter and "Lord Clyde" together, so it would be difficult to say which would be the most effective flower, especially by candle-light.

I will now give a list of white flowers, blotched or spotted with rose or crimson. I am not in all cases quite certain of these flowers, as some of the notes I had preserved have lost the colours attached to them; but I have repaired this loss by

* I ought here to explain that the raiser's name added after the flower is in this case absolutely necessary, to distinguish one flower from another quite different kind, raised by a different grower. The immense variety causes this confusion.

obtaining in their stead opinions of first-rate excellence.

White and red Geraniums. *Ariel* (Fellows), *Bridesmaid* (Beck), *Blanchefleur* (almost white), *Desdemona* (Fuller), *Fairest of the Fair* (Beck), *Gem of the West* (Fuller), *Larksfield Rival* (Davies, very pretty and forces well), *Mrs. Benyon* (Hoyle), and *The Bride* (Beck). Amongst the brilliant scarlet-crimson or scarlet flowers are *Etna* (Turner), *Eclipse* (Topping), *Glow-worm* (Foster), *Lord Clyde* (Foster), *Rosa Bonheur* (Foster), and *Scarlet Floribunda* (Turner).

Vestal (Beck), *Cinderella* (Turner), *Fair Helen* (Story), *Princess Beatrice* (Veitch), are white flowers, with darker blotches of purple or maroon.

Beauty of Reading (Hoyle), *Annette* (Foster), *Carlos* (Hoyle), *Mrs. Benyon* (Hoyle), *Peeress* (Beck), *Rosa Bonheur* (Hoyle), *Rose Celestial* (Turner), and *The Belle* (Turner), are all brilliant rose flowers.

Couleur de Rose (Beck) and *Leviathan* (Hoyle), the latter a large purple flower, are said to be very good ; but I do not remember them sufficiently clearly to be certain of their shades.

Geraniums are, however, in this way the least to be considered of all flowers I know, as their beautiful markings so well soften differences in the prevailing tints.

JULY AUGUST & SEPTEMBER.

We have now to begin almost a new regime. Roses and Carnations, some of the Geraniums, and a few Verbenas, are all that we have to keep of our earlier lists.

Large white garden Lilies, and the many beautiful green-house kinds, all of most easy culture, are now in blossom; Passion-flowers and scarlet Cactuses; many brilliant orchids; Carnations of every colour; Stephanotis and Gardenias; and trailing wreaths of Achimenes and of bright Convolvuli.

The magnificent "Climbing Lily" or *Lapageria Rosea*, used in Peruvian rooms for hanging in wreaths on walls, is a flower to which I wish to call most especial notice for all "cut flower" uses. I have not grown it myself at present, but I believe its culture, now well understood, is by no means difficult; at Veitch's nursery in the King's Road, Chelsea, I know that an immense plant of it has been adorning a wall for many months with its splendid blossoms. The flowers were out in May, and the plant has continued blossoming till the present time. I had the flower on my table, exactly in front of the fire, for just six days *after the flower was not only gathered, but broken from the stem*, so that of course it could obtain no water; and all this

time it showed no sign of fading. Unfortunately, however, it was accidentally thrown down, when the petals separated; but as by that time I was interested in its lasting, I pinned them together again with a little wire, in which way it remained fresh for a few more days. Nothing could have more fully proved its value to wear in the hair, or dress, or for forming wreaths for almost any purpose.

The flower is of a most thick waxen substance, the colour brilliant scarlet rose, and the form drooping like a narrow bell; it is about three inches long. I think, and the leaves are beautiful, of a dark kind of evergreen. When worn, it would be well, for greater security, to attach it to its own stem by a fine green wire, which does not hurt the flowers in the least.

The *Achimenes* class are again a most useful addition to the summer and autumn flowers, especially for hanging baskets, for vases which they fill and overhang in wreaths, and in rarer instances even for "cut flowers." It is not necessary to do more than name a few of each decided colour: *A. Meteor* and *Dazzle* are a brilliant scarlet, as also *Picta*, which flowers in the winter under proper treatment.

A. Longiflora Alba, *Margaretta* and *Dr. Hopf* are white; *Baumannii hirsuta*, *Carl Woolfartii*, and *Longiflora Major*, are purple, blue, or violet; *Duc* and *Duchesse de Brabant*; *Lady C. Kerrison*, *Perle des*

Tydeas, and *Princess Charlotte*, are rose. These plants can be kept in succession, and form the most beautiful masses of blossom hanging from a shallow basket of wire or of wicker.

Amongst *Gloxinias*, also, there is the new "*Inimitable*," which I have not seen, but which I believe will prove a most useful flower of a beautiful pink, shaded to crimson and blotched with white. The *Gloxinias* generally are particularly brilliant and beautiful, and nothing gives a more exquisite tone of coolness and of freshness to a group of plants than a white *Gloxinia* with a purple throat. *G. Donna Colonna*, *Ketelseri*, *Alba violacea*, *Novelty*, and *Princess Royal*, are all of this most peculiar and useful tone. *Alba Grandiflora*, *Auriculata Alba*, and *Duchesse de Brabant*, are more of white; and *Princess Alice*, *Rex igneus*, *Duke of Wellington*, *Victoria Regina*, *Juno*, and *Loveliness*, are all of rose or of rose and white. These are all taken from Veitch's list; for I find that sometimes it is well to name a list in this way as a guide, since there may be occasionally variations as to names — some flowers being known by so many appellations.

Begonias I need not give lists of, as they are grown much for foliage; and, except in a few cases, are not much used for vases, as the petals fall off easily and cannot well be fixed.

The beautiful *Carnation* tribes are all in their

brightest blossom just about July ; and there are now one or two snow-white flowers, introduced, I think, by Edinburgh florists, which are lovely to look at, while sharing, as for instance *The Bride* does, the exceeding fragrance of the old red clove Carnation—of all the old-fashioned flowers one of the most universal favourites. These are all of them flowers that last for days.

Pansies are most beautiful, and make wonderfully lovely dishes ; those, however, of bronze and yellow, or of yellow and crimson, should be avoided, as they give, amongst others, a look of being faded. I give the names of some of the best kinds there are from the list of Downie, Laird, and Laing. And in doing so I must mention that I have found a bed of pansies in a little London garden to afford an incessant supply of flowers for gathering, as well as looking remarkably bright and beautiful.

Amongst the best, with white grounds, are *Lady Rosslyn*, *Cream of the Valley*, *Maid of Bath*, *Duchess of Hamilton*, *Isa Craig*, and *Lady Lucy Dundas*.

Among those with golden yellow grounds, are *Alice*, *Duke of Wellington*, *Lord Clyde*, *Mrs. Downie*, and *Perfection*. Most of these are shaded and blotched with the darkest purple.

Alexander M'Nab, *Jessie*, *Eclat*, *King of Purples*, *Miss Carnegie*, and *Nepaulese Chief*, are amongst the very finest of the beautiful dark flowers.

I have given, perhaps, a needlessly long list of these, but they are well deserving of being much more grown, especially for flat dishes.

Phloxes are now also flowering ; they will, indeed, have been in blossom almost all the summer. They are chiefly adapted for vases of mixed flowers, in which they are lovely. The variety is, however, so immensely great, that I had rather refer for them to the same catalogue I named for Pansies, as it is quite impossible here to describe the less prominent varieties. The prettiest and gayest kinds, perhaps, are those of white with a rose or violet eye, and those of rose with a crimson centre. Striped flowers are not nearly so good or half so effective. The *Antirrhinums* are very gay and showy ; so are *Pentstemons*, and also *Mimulus*, which grows well in shady places, standing in pans of water, and gives many flowers.

Verbenas are, however, perhaps the most important section for the late summer months. Amongst scarlets, those with light eyes are generally, most effective, though, perhaps, less handsome as individual flowers. In this class, I may name, *Diadem*, *Lord Clyde*, *Comet*, *Eclipse*, *Ne plus Ultra*, *Defiance*, and *Surprise*, *Mrs. Woodruffe* and *Firefly*.

Snowflake is the best white, *Mrs. Holford* and *Blanche* probably are the next best white ; *Fairest of the Fair* is white with a purple eye. *General*

Simpson, *Géant des Batailles*, and *Calypso* are, I believe, among the best of bright crimson flowers. For light beautiful pink, I never saw any better than the old *Teucrioides* in places where it grew well. *Helen* was also beautiful; *Nobilissima* is now said to be a beautiful rose kind with a lighter eye.

Cinerarias are abundant; so are *Larkspurs*; *Dahlias* and *China Asters* almost too much so. *Heliotropes*, including the fragrant pale *Corymbosum*, and the greyish white *Candidum*, are also met with everywhere.

These months, however, are rich in most kinds of blossom: blue flowers, perhaps, are among the scarcest, as purple and violet by no means serve for the pale azure shade. Some *Larkspurs*, and many *Irises*, are most useful here, as well as the lovely *Passion-flower* (*Edulis*), and the blue *Lobelias* when they are not too straggling.



OCTOBER NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.

In these months, happily, people are out of town; if they were not, they would have few flowers. In the country, however, gardeners so far know what time of year to think of, that they mostly contrive to show plenty of flowers amidst the Christmas evergreens.

Poinsettias are good, and so is *Vinca Rosea*, which is, in fact, merely a double Periwinkle. A few Heaths and Camellias are advanced to blossom; greenhouses obtain a fair supply of Roses; as, indeed, do London sitting-rooms if they keep the plants light and cool, the shade of a plant-case preserving the blossom at least for many days.

The *Dracæna terminalis*, though not a flower, is, notwithstanding, a first-rate decorative plant, from its bright crimson leaves, which are very beautiful.

Erica gracilis, and *Erica hyemalis*, are certainly two of the very prettiest Heaths. Chinese Primroses are useful, and so are Hare's-foot Ferns, and the Maiden-hair (*Adiantum formosum* particularly, and *A. cuneatum*). Narcissi, particularly the *Double Roman*, and in December, Hyacinths, and red *Van Thol* Tulips, begin to be very useful.

Scarlet Geraniums and Heliotropes, if people would only think so, could be made very brilliant. But it is hardly practical to give lists for these months, since every gardener brings on his plants to blossom as he best can, and every lady uses just what she can get. I must not, however, fail to mention most especially the beautiful *single* Anemones, in their many shades of scarlet and purple, white, and pink, and blue. These may be had at this season in the greatest profusion, by sowing in pots in February, and keeping out of doors till the first frost comes, from

which they must be sheltered by frames or hand-glasses. I shall never forget a long suite of rooms I once saw filled with vases of these most lovely flowers in every bright shade possible.

There are a few plants which should not be forgotten in speaking of decorations. The *Adelaster albevenis*, a Peruvian plant recently introduced, is one of the prettiest ornaments possible for a table ; its rich glossy leaves, something like soft satin veined with silver threads, having a peculiarly bright appearance. Then there are " caricature plants " (*Graptophyllum versicolor*), which are very ornamental in their foliage—blotched with great rosy stains, the clear-cut edges forming most amusing profiles. Zuccas are also singular, pretty plants : the Tree Ferns are beautiful ; and the *Cyanophyllum magnificum*, with its great green velvet leaves, is one of the wonders which Mexican forests send us.

Ferns may also be mentioned here particularly, although they belong, in fact, to all seasons equally. The most economical, and I think also by far the most agreeable plan, is to grow the Ferns oneself, that will be required. Nursery-men naturally do not like to deprive a plant of its beauty by cutting off all its fronds ; and when they are home-grown, by having the roots in rather small-sized flowerpots, we can often, without cutting them, make the plants go through many successive changes ; adorning, between-

whiles, our flower stands in a most charming manner.

The following Ferns are the most easy kinds to grow, while they are at the same time the prettiest for all vase arrangements :

Davallia dissecta, *D. canariensis* and *D. bullata*. *Adiantum formosum*, *A. cuneatum*, and *A. capillis veneris* (if kept damp when gathered, otherwise it shrivels sadly).

Pteris longifolia, *P. serrulata*, *P. argyrea*, and *P. plumula*, *Gymmogramma ochracea* (one of the gold Ferns), and *Dennstædtia adiantoides* are all very good ; the latter being a large, widely spreading Fern of the most brilliant green, looking in winter so soft and beautiful as to eclipse the loveliness of all the gayer flowers. A large plant which I bought last January, at Hooper's, in Covent Garden (where all the ferns here named have been procured), had been formed into a sort of pyramid of interwoven foliage, which, while appearing to be a merely natural entanglement of exquisite grace and lightness, formed a tall and most picturesque centre of a brilliant group ; surrounded upon all sides by its beautiful waving fronds, which are both wide and spreading.

My readers must be reminded also of a fragrant Fern—*Asplenium fragrans*, of which, in January, one gathered frond is sufficient to fill a room with its delightful perfume.

Blechnum Brasiliensis, *Scolopendrium vulgare*, and *Polypodium vulgare*, are rather useful contrasts, being stiff and dark. The *Odontasoria tenuifolia* has an exquisitely graceful fragile kind of frond, adapted charmingly for waving over a bouquet of delicately tinted flowers.

For covering the ground, nothing, I think, is prettier than the common *Lycopodium denticulatum*; a simple moss of a delightful green: the *Selaginella cæsia* is also a very beautiful little trailing plant, while *S. cuspidata*, *S. inæquifolia*, *S. viticulosa*, and *S. delicatissima* may either be described as tiny low-growing ferns, or as aspiring mosses.

All these kinds, I know, may be grown with ease by an amateur, merely requiring care as to sufficient moisture in the air and soil.

Allosorus crispus.

Lastrea felixmas, *L. cristata*.

Cyathea dealbata.

Davallia dissecta, *D. canariensis*, *D. bullata*.

Adiantum formosum, *A. cuneatum*, *A. capillis veneris*.

Pteris longifolia, *P. serrulata*, *P. argyrea*, *P. plumula*.

Gymmogramma ochracea.

Dennstædtia adiantoides.

Asplenium fragrans.

Blechnum Brasiliensis.

Scolopendrium vulgare.

Polypodium vulgare.

Odontasoria tenuifolia.

Lycopodium denticulatum.

Selaginella cæsia, *S. cuspidata*, *S. inæquifolia*, *S. viticulosa*, *S. delicatissima*.

After all the remarks I have made on green, it is a pleasure to observe that winter bouquets are sometimes the prettiest. Not having many flowers, people *must* use much green, and it is remarkable how well those few flowers look.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VASES AND APPLIANCES FOR THE DINNER
TABLE, ETC.

WE have here to consider an indirect but very important part of all good arrangement, the vases or stands in which to place our flowers.

Few things are brought, indeed, to a greater perfection than these glass and china wares; and while the magnificent vases of gold and silver are none too splendid for the lovely flowers that fill them, the simpler and plainer kinds are on their side beautified and made precious by the fair flowers which crown them.

Glass and china in many ways are deservedly popular under the present Russian dinner system. The ease wherewith they are cleaned, and their truly graceful though less expensive material, are very much in their favour; and the Dresden, Parian, white, and Majolica services, are so extremely beautiful, that our chiefest difficulty is which to describe most fully.

One very beautiful dessert set is made of the glazed white china; a tall stand forming the centre piece, bearing three or four rows of dishes—charming for Ferns and Heaths; and at the top of the table,

boys support between them a cluster of purple grapes with vine leaves. It is the figures and faces of these



particular boys that make the group so charming. Another pretty group is a sea-horse and boy bearing a shell. A Neapolitan bearing baskets has a less pleasing face; but in the beautiful, soft-coloured Majolica, the boy and the donkey, for a drawing-room table, deserves an especial notice!

In the pierced vases and dishes that are now

used so much, I am myself an advocate for green or purple, instead of ruby glasses. I do not find that the ruby colour suits at all well with the rose and crimson flowers which so frequently are used.

There is one pretty group I have now before me, made in Parian—three boys with fish and birds supporting the dish. This would look very pretty if arranged with an inside glass of dark green or purple, filled with Strawberry leaves and vines drooping gracefully, with Strawberry blossoms also, mixed amongst the fruit. It may be sometimes forgotten that Strawberry blossoms are very often found growing on the same plants as the ripe scarlet berries, and there is something pleasant in any approach to nature and her ways.

Raspberries, again, if gathered in their own fragrant bunches and mixed with many leaves, make very charming drooping sprays both of fruit and foliage.

In fact, in almost every case, I believe fruit looks its best when grouped with its own leaves; even cherries do, certainly—piled up high with sprays of dark and glossy, deeply serrated foliage.

The boy with the sea-horse, and sea things generally, would look wonderfully, appropriately arrayed with trailing coloured *sea-weeds*, or otherwise with green Ferns.

The brighter coloured groups are also very beautiful; and where it is difficult to obtain good flowers, I think it is an advantage to have recourse to this means of obtaining colour.

Where flowers are very numerous it is, as I have already hinted, really very difficult to prevent their clashing with the enamel blue and the Rose du Barry, and the exquisite paintings which vie with them in brightness. Pale-coloured or white flowers, and many wide-spreading leaves, are probably in these cases amongst the best to use. Hops and ears of corn may be peculiar, but not for that less lovely for a gaily painted set.

The white glazed china on its side, while suiting any flowers, has the one objection, of wanting a sharper outline; but still the graceful figures for the larger pieces, and the little pretty flower-girls, with their baskets of violets or of pale spring flowers, are something really particularly nice.

Perhaps, in arranging a dinner table, the very best formation is that which gives one very high centre piece as a sort of keynote; and then a wider and lower group at each end of the table, the intermediate space being broken by clusters of light, moderate sized vases, or plants in flower-pots. And to me it seems an essential point of taste to place any flower-pots in *square vases*, rather than in such as

seem, for no object, to aim at reproducing the shape of the red flower-pots.

For standing in the centres or corners of conservatories, for staircase windows, or for little ante-rooms, nothing can be more beautiful than an enormous sort of stand made of Majolica, and lighted up in the most remarkable manner by a ring of Auriculas or Daises set closely round the edge. One tall flower in the centre place, with low growing flowers all round, with a bed of moss, would be truly beautiful ; and many people would be surprised at finding how long the moisture around the roots would cause these plants to last. Something of the same kind can also be had for fountains, and Water Lilies gathered and placed in their own watery home will retain their beauty long, and be very exquisite. Nothing certainly has so perfectly fair and suitable an appearance as these Water Lilies spread out in sparkling water.

White Marble is doubtless *the* material for fountains and large vases ; still where it is not found, and where Parian is thought too suggestive of imitation, Majolica most certainly leaves little to be desired.

Among the ornaments of slabs and side tables, or for small conservatories, few things are more beautiful and more fresh and cool in summer than the widely spreading vases, or rather cisterns, of

this beautiful material. The soft dark tints give a wonderfully cool appearance, and filled with Water Lilies, or with a group of Arums growing in flower-pots concealed with moss and pebbles, they well replace a fountain. Some of these cisterns, adorned with shells and foliage, are remarkably beautiful, and of most graceful shapes. There are also now many Majolica and other vases for containing flower-pots, some of which are extremely beautiful; for these again the square form will be found infinitely most useful as well as the best looking, as it either admits of three or four little plants, or of one large group with surrounding moss.

Many people, indeed, are inclined to wish most sincerely that square *common* flower-pots were introduced and used, merely made in some hard baked crockery, or graystone material. Nothing would conduce more to the lasting beauty and the health of plants than making such things general; while it would at once do away with the constant worry of concealing flower-pots, which are ugly simply by their shape and colour, added to their very usual appearance of disproportion. Nothing, however, has a better effect in this line than the jardinières or window boxes, or the trays of zinc in which a bed of moss gives the appearance of a large mass of flowers.

Used in this way, spikes of *Gladiolus* from June

to almost November, Lilies and Irises, Hyacinths and Narcissi, and many other flowers, may be arranged to form most splendid masses; the flowers all the time standing in bottles of water underneath the green, or being placed in sand, which should be then kept moist. In recesses and for window niches, this is a practice which is sure to become popular. Evergreens, however, must not be forgotten, as much of the success depends on the green they give. I must not, however, be supposed to advocate detestable "sham plants," only an honest arrangement of monster bouquets, mixed when practicable with growing plants and evergreens.

THE END.







